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FREE SPEECH

Are We The Luckiest Hypocrites In The World?

Britons must be the biggest hypocrites in the world—or the best self-deceivers. Back in Britain after five years abroad I've found fantastic changes: we're *prosperous*. But will people admit it? Never!

Gone is austerity, not only in the shops, but in manners. For a century Britons have been starchy, duty-comes-first, conservative owls. Now, at last, they've decided that life is actually a thing to enjoy. But all I hear them talk about is the balance of payments, inflation, deflation, working harder, slumps. . . .

It's incredible, but the British have relaxed their way of life without knowing it. Look at the stylish clothes, jeans, bright socks, the Continental bubble-cars, scooters, good food. At last they have come round to accepting what the rest of the world has always known. And I say: Long live Gay Britain.

P. RUSSELL, WESTON-SUPER-MARE.

★ ★ ★

Cashing In

We have a very smart shopkeeper in this town. He has converted one column of his 2s.-in-the-slot cigarette machine to take shilling packets of chocolate. To each packet he attaches a 1s. piece.

And when the electricity man is due in his neighbourhood to empty the meters, he certainly does a brisk trade in chocolate.

C. W. RAFFE, WINDERMERE ROAD, BIRKENHEAD.

★ ★ ★

Pet Cure

When I take my two healthy—but old and rather stiff-jointed—dogs for a walk I find that they make a bee-line for a plant named comfrey and eat the leaves with relish.

This herb used to be used by country folk to make cough medicine. Can it be that the dogs are showing that it is also a cure for rheumatism?

J. E. MITCHELL, HOLBURN STREET, ABERDEEN.

"How the dogs know I can't imagine, but comfrey is an old cure for rheumatism," says a pharmacist. "We no longer use it, and it isn't usual to eat the leaves, but herbalists still recommend comfrey poultices."

★ ★ ★

Getting A Kink

All my life I have had thick, straight hair. Now, at fifty-two, I find that it has developed a wonderful wave—so perhaps I can expect the last few struggling wisps to be in ringlets. A pity it had to come so late!

W. TURNER, ROSEBURY ROAD, MUSWELL HILL, LONDON.

"But they're not curls to be proud of, like a baby's," says a hair specialist. "Men sometimes develop a wave when they're going thin on top—the hair no longer grows smoothly and gets a kink. Real curls are inherited."

★ ★ ★

Trotting Day

I was very interested in Mark Wilson's article on trotting (JOHN BULL, July 12), but the date given as that of Musselburgh Fair Day was wrong. The races are held on the first Wednesday after

Continued on page 4

Why do so many busy people chew Wrigley's Spearmint?

Because they find pleasant chewing eases tension, helps them work more relaxed

TRY SOME YOURSELF AND SEE!

FREE SPEECH

continued from page 3

the second Tuesday in August—this year on August 13—and have no connection with the English Bank Holiday.

Trotting races have been held in Musselburgh since before 1896, and before horses were displaced by cars many more competitions were held.

Because of a Jockey Club ruling we can hold only one meeting a year. They are apparently under the mistaken impression that trotting conflicts with horse racing. In fact, though our following is large, it is an altogether different one from that of horse racing.

W. IRVING, SECRETARY, MUSSELBURGH FAIR DAY ASSOCIATION, MIDLOTHIAN.

The Riot Act

A friend of mine had the same idea as the reader who let his garden run riot and turn into a wilderness ("Free Speech," July 19). All went well until an inspector from the Ministry of Agriculture called at the request of neighbours fed up with weed seeds blowing into their gardens.

His lack of consideration for others cost him quite a bit: paying a gardener to cut down the wilderness and burn it—by order.

E. W. PIPE, COKEHAM LANE, LANCING, SUSSEX.

"You can be told to get rid of certain weeds only —thistles, dock, ragwort," says a lawyer. "The Act, to protect farmers, now also empowers some local authorities to stop you having these weeds in your garden."

Baby Luck

Northerners still have several strange beliefs about newborn babies ("Free Speech," July 19).

Not only is it considered unlucky to go visiting before the christening and churching, but when the christening party leaves home to go to church the woman carrying the baby staves off bad luck by taking a piece of cake and some silver money wrapped in paper. And if the baby is a girl the mother gives the package to the first male person they meet—often to his great surprise.

Another, to me, silly superstition, is the belief that it is unlucky for the baby not to receive three gifts at each of the first three houses visited after the christening—usually packets of tea, sugar and salt.

But as other houses after the first three also insist on giving three gifts, Mother usually returns home heavily laden.

MRS. A. H., WINGATE, CO. DURHAM.

HALT . . . Slowly

As secretary of a local road safety committee I am baffled by the rules about road signs.

For a long time the committee has been trying to cut the number of accidents at a danger spot where motorists are constantly failing to notice a halt sign.

We asked that the word HALT be painted in four-foot letters on the road. The ministry says no, but they will allow SLOW to be painted on the road.

We can't understand it. Obviously we can't

put SLOW next to a halt sign. And, anyway, why *can't* we have HALT?

MRS. G. M. BARRETT, WATERSMEET, CHATTERIS, CAMBS.

"When this rule was made it was considered that one sign was adequate," says the Ministry of Transport, "and we have to have uniformity. As it happens, the rule is now under review. Experiments are being made in using the painted HALT *with a halt sign."*

Up The Wall

When we moved into this house four years ago I thought how nice it would be to redecorate as we pleased ("Free Speech," July 26). How wrong I was!

In case we ever want to sell the house, my husband insists that all the decorations must be neutral. His argument is that although they might not appeal to intending buyers, at least they would not offend them. A nice theory—but deadly dull in practice. I'm all for decorating to suit yourself—not some ghostly future owner.

MRS. MOLLY ROWE, SCHOOL HILL, DENMEAD, PORTSMOUTH.

THIS WEEK'S COVER

HERE come the lucky ones! Those tans are going to be the envy of offices and garden fences for weeks to come—and there'll be no need for the traditional question: "Did you have good weather?" Not for them the nagging doubts about gale warnings, lost toothbrushes or mislaid rail tickets. They know now what they always knew: that it would be wonderful. "All the same," says Critchlow, "I'd sooner be with those pale-faces at the barrier. At least their soft sands and swishing seas are not another year ahead."

Look Alive

I live near the Liverpool—Southport electric line which has a number of unattended level-crossings—and where several people have been killed in recent years ("Free Speech," July 26).

British Railways say that their notices give adequate warning, but at the inquests it is usually revealed that the weather was bad or the victim was hard of hearing, had poor eyesight or was crossing in a daydream.

Why cannot the railways make the gates "live" when a train is due, as is done with cattle fences? The shock need only be slight.

The cost should be very low—and in any case, surely it is worth some expense to save lives.

P. E. BOULTON, RATHBONE ROAD, HIGHTOWN.

"But human beings aren't cattle," say British Railways. "Even a slight shock could be fatal to a nervous person. If you are going to have this type of system a warning light would be better. But the snag is the same in both cases: the high cost of installation—and maintenance—isn't justified by the number of deaths."

In Their Blood

So a child psychologist believes that seeing violence on films does no harm, that "there is no need to ban children from 'X' films. Seeing make-believe violence can work off pent-up aggressions" ("Free Speech," July 19).

Nonsense! As a headmistress with forty years' experience in schools I can assure him that children are "born imitators."

MISS E. J., MANCHESTER.

JOHN BULL pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech," and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the JOHN BULL Free Advice Service, whose experts answer questions by post.

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AMBUSH AT MOONRISE

by **BRIAN CLEEVE**

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE DITTON

Beginning the thrilling romantic story of the Black Rose . . . the woman a nation feared

I STOOD for a moment as I came over the ridge, the harsh white light of the moon throwing my shadow far down the silver track towards the farmhouse. A long, dark roof seemed to run back into the pale flank of the mountain on the far side of the valley, and all round were the white peaks of the Dolomites, still covered with last winter's snow, although it was summer now.

Somewhere in that frozen tangle of rocks and valleys lay the frontier, four, five miles to the north. And for a second I narrowed my eyes, measuring, trying to see the track a man might take between the farm and the frontier. Then I began limping down into the valley, my broken boots slipping and rasping on my blistered feet.

Ten minutes later I was at the door of the farmhouse. And again I stood for a second, my hand lifted to knock on the heavy, night-black timbers. But this time not to measure anything, except maybe myself.

It was like the moment before a dive from the cliff top, the water a pavement of green marble far below; or the start of a race, the breath like a hard knot in your throat, waiting for the pisto

She came very close to me, until I felt her breath warm in my face. "Who are you?" she asked. I said: "A traveller. They call me Ugo Buffo. Funny Ugo"

The Rose was like a blood-mad panther. But even she

shot. Except that this was worse, far worse, because the penalty for failure in this race, this dive, was to be killed.

I shut my eyes. Maybe I'd come too late, and the house was asleep, and I could go away again and not come back. But as I stood, hearing my heart beating, there was a woman's voice, rising from a mutter into a scream of passion.

"*Brutta, stupida,* filthy wretch. . . ." And there followed the sound of a blow, the full, ringing smack of an open hand against a cheek.

I knocked, and there was an instant of silence inside the house, as if they were all holding their breath. I knocked again.

"Who's there?" It was a man's voice this time, deep and powerful.

"A traveller," I said, "begging shelter. . . ."

"Go away," shouted the woman. "This isn't an inn. Go."

BUT in the same second there were swift, heavy footsteps and the door swung open as if the wind had crashed it back. A light shone in my eyes, blinding me, and a hand gripped the ragged collar of my coat, dragging me in, lifting me till my feet swung clear of the stone floor, choking me until the blood drummed at my eyeballs.

"*Gesú,*" I whispered, clawing at the hand and wrist holding me. I might as well have clawed at an iron bar. Then I was dropped and fell in a heap on the flagstones. I saw a pair of mountain boots in front of me, bigger than any I've seen in my life. And above them were legs like tree trunks in their rough serge leggings. The feet moved and I shut my eyes, expecting the crash of the boot against my face. Oh, mother of mercy, why had I come?

But the boots only stepped back from me.

"Get up," he said.

I climbed to my feet and found that my knees were trembling. The light was in my eyes again, but I could see a little behind it now. I could see an old woman in a chair by the big, tiled stove; a long wooden table and a girl bent over it, as if she were frozen in the act of scrubbing. I saw her huge charcoal pits of eyes staring at me, and her face small and pale except for the darkening bruise on one cheek.

Just behind her was the woman who must have given her the bruise. As I looked up she stepped forward into the circle of light and I caught my breath. I knew who she must be. *La Rosa Nera*—the Black Rose. It must be her. There could be no forgetting that face, like a dark ivory madonna's until you looked into the eyes, looked at the hard, carved mouth. And the black hair sleek as panther's fur; the shoulders squared as if they were still carrying bandoliers.

She must be thirty-two now, maybe thirty-three. But, looking at her in the lamplight, I could see that nothing had changed for her in the thirteen years since the shooting stopped, and the partisans had gone back to their ordinary lives. For her, the shooting *had* been ordinary life. Still was.

I knew then that I had been right. My hunch that this farm was the place we wanted had been right. The thing was, could I live long enough to prove it?

She came very close to me, until I felt her breath warm in my face. I let my mouth hang open in a weak, ingratiating grin.

"Who are you?" she whispered.

"A traveller," I said again. "They call me Ugo Buffo. Funny Ugo."

"A traveller?" said the big man, laughing. "You mean a tramp. Leave him alone, Rosa. He's harmless."

"You think too many dangerous things are harmless," she said, swinging on him. Then, turning back to me. "Show me your feet."

"My feet?" I quavered.

"Yes, little man, your feet." And with a sudden stoop she caught my ankle and lifted it like a farrier inspecting a horse's hoof.

I spun round and would have fallen if the table hadn't been there to save me. I fell half across it and found myself staring into the girl's face, the girl with the bruised cheek and the huge, charcoal smudges of eyes. And as I fell she smiled at me, timid as a bird but full of pity. As if she was genuinely sorry to see even a stranger ill-used.

Behind me the woman Rosa had wrenched off my broken, flapping boot. "Shine the light on it, Leo," she said, and I felt the warmth of the lantern for a moment against my blistered foot. It can't have looked very pretty.

Leo, she had said. *Leo.* And I realized who the man was. Leo Amintore. Bandit and killer.

"Phaugh!" she said, letting go of my foot and brushing her fingertips together. And, before I could think, I had let the relief show in my face, as I thanked God I'd done what I had done that day: walked twenty-six miles in the burning September sun, up the steep mountain road; up the cart track that turned from it; up the winding, almost invisible, footpath that led the last five miles to this farm; walked until the boots, that had already been ruined when I started, fell to pieces on my torn feet.

"All right," Rosa was saying. "They look genuine enough. Still, why did you come here?"

But I was staring at the girl, who had seen the relief in my face and whose eyes had gone wide as she saw it. *She's going to say something,* I thought.

And I shut my own eyes. I counted, *one, two, three, four.* Still nothing. I opened my eyes again and she had bent her head and was beginning to scrub.

"Why shouldn't I come here?" I said. "I'm on the tramp, as the *padrone* said." I bobbed my head towards the man called Leo and creased my face into a smile. "Looking for work when God sends it. . . ."

He stepped towards me again and I flinched backwards. "Don't be afraid, little man," he said. "Tell me, have you been in America?"

"*Si, signor.* Yeah, yeah. As a child. . . ."

"I thought I could hear it in your voice," he said. "Where?"

"New York, *signor.* My father had a café. But he came back for the war, heaven mend his head. When I was ten. The *signor* is a magician to hear it in my voice after all these years."

HE grinned at the compliment, his big face splitting into a sudden, almost childish smile. "I've an ear like a tuning fork," he said. "You see that, Rosa?"

"I see nothing but trouble," she said. "Turn him out."

"Not an Americano," said Leo. He let his hand fall on my shoulder. "Five years I spent in America," he went on. "New York, Chicago, Detroit. And up in Canada. England, too. London, Liverpool. I know them all. And now look at me. Here." He threw back his huge head and laughed, and at the far end of the long, shadowy room the delf chimed softly on the high wooden dresser, shaken by his voice. "You can sleep up in the loft for the night, and tomorrow we'll talk about America." He stretched and yawned, and his arms and chest seemed to fill the kitchen.

"Are you mad?" said Rosa. Leo reached out his long arm and gripped her shoulder. "I'm the boss," he said. "He sleeps here tonight."

For a long second she met his eyes. Then she shrugged, turning away from him. Leo jerked his thumb at the door. "Go round the back," he said. "The loft door's open and there's plenty of straw."

I ducked my head again and backed out of the door. All the while the old woman in the chair by the fire had never moved, never spoken. At the table the girl still scrubbed, her brush rasping on the yellowed planks. As I closed the door behind me, I heard Rosa scream at her again. "Scrub, you wretch. Do you call that scrubbing?"

Outside, I was astonished to see by the moon and the shadows that barely five minutes had gone since I first knocked on the door. I drew in a long breath of the cool night, glad to be still alive, and limped round to the back of the long stone-and-timber farmhouse.

An earth-and-log ramp led up from the natural slope of the hillside behind the building, into the loft that occupied the upper storey of the house.

Below the loft there was a cattle byre, and as I passed the small windows I could hear the stamp and shuffle of beasts and the slow *chomp* of their jaws on their fodder.

I swung open one leaf of the double doors into the loft, and the moonlight seemed to follow me inside, until I realized it was pouring through gaps in the timber roof where the wooden shingles had rotted away. A rat squeaked and rustled among the straw.

I realized suddenly that my mouth was dry with thirst and that I hadn't eaten for six hours. But at least I was still alive, and the first step of my job was behind me. Because, without any question, this was the place we had been looking for: the smugglers' terminus on this side of the frontier, the one we'd been looking for for eighteen months; the route by which wanted men disappeared and unwanted men came in; by which jewels and drugs and stolen goods and anything else that smugglers can make a profit on streamed in and out of the country as if the frontier didn't exist.

FOR a year past heads had been falling in the police because we hadn't nailed the traffic down. It was not a wholesale, insolent traffic, like lorryloads of tobacco and nylons and brandy, disguised as something else. But in a way it was worse than that, even more insolent.

When the gold bullion disappeared from the Turin bank, this was the way it went; and the paintings from the American's villa on Lake Orta; and the Etruscan statues; and a thousand and one other things, until you couldn't say "smuggling" to any of us in the police but we thought of this one route.

We had the mountains combed. There wasn't an informer in the villages that we didn't question. And yet not a whisper came in. It was as if a curtain of fear had fallen on the frontier.

Because it wasn't the ordinary silence of smugglers' loyalty. As a rule the small men are loyal enough to one another, but they hate the big operators who try and organize them, and bring down too much police attention on an area. Usually they'll inform on them fast enough. But not this time. Either they genuinely knew nothing, or they were too afraid to talk. And it takes a lot to make mountain men afraid.

And then, quite unconnected with the case, quite out of the blue, somebody down in the barracks mentioned that *la Rosa Nera* was out of prison and back in the mountains, living on her mother's farm again. And by one of those instincts that sometimes get policemen promoted —and sometimes get them killed—I knew that this was the thread I had been looking for.

The Black Rose. She had been famous in

was scared of this giant whose fingers had closed on me

Benvenuta came to me softly like a small ghost. "You must be an angel," I whispered. "Or a witch . . ."

these mountains when I was still a child, although she couldn't have been much more than a child herself.

Half-bandit, half-partisan, she had been the lieutenant of Leo Amintore, who for nearly the last two years of the war had ruled a hundred square miles of valleys and mountains like a private kingdom.

Ex-gangster, ex-American paratrooper, he had looted and killed Fascists and Communists, Germans and Italians with careless impartiality. And *la Rosa Nera* had helped him, like a ferocious, blood-mad panther at his heels.

After the war was over, they were both tried for war crimes that should have been enough to put them away for life. But at that time the word partisan was like a magic talisman and they were acquitted, leaving the court trailing clouds of perjury and glory.

After that they both disappeared until *la Rosa Nera* was picked up by a Customs patrol off Bari, in a motor-launch containing fifty million lire worth of American cigarettes. A Customs officer was shot and nearly killed and *la Rosa Nera* went to prison for three years. It would have been for much longer, the judge said, but for her brilliant and courageous record during the war. I remember how we laughed down in the barracks when we read that.

Then I forgot about her, until somebody mentioned that she was free again and living on her mother's farm. I knew then in my bones that she was at the bottom of this new smuggling route. But it's one thing to know a thing in one's bones, and another thing to convince superiors; and another thing still to prove it in a court.

And so that September day I had walked twenty-six miles in tramp's clothing to that farmhouse in the mountains.

"Too far from the frontier to be what we're looking for," Captain Pelletti had said. "And the Rose wouldn't dare. But you've got three weeks' leave due if you want to take it. . . ."

And now I had found not only the Black Rose but Leo Amintore as well, and the last shadow of doubt had gone. All that I needed was proof.

THE moonlight shifted on the dusty floor and a bat flickered its shadowy leather wings across one of the gaps in the roof. The door of the loft creaked.

"Are you asleep?" a voice whispered.

I lifted on one elbow and stared. She came across the floor on bare feet, almost as softly as a small ghost. "I brought you something to eat and drink," she breathed. She held out a bottle of wine and some black bread and a lump of coarse cheese. "It was the best I could do."

"You must be an angel," I whispered. "Or a witch." I put the bottle to my mouth and drank. The wine was raw and rough as gravel, and yet like nectar. I sank my teeth into the sour bread. She watched me, her head a little on one side, her eyes full of compassion. And yet there was something else in her face as well, something almost like envy, and a horrible thought struck me.

"Is . . . was this your supper?" I said. She shook her head, but I knew that she was lying. "Let's share it," I said.

I broke half the bread and cheese and put it in her lap, as she kneeled in front of me, and put the bottle into her hand. She looked at me for a moment, smiling the way she had smiled down below in the kitchen. Then she lifted her chin and drank. I saw how thin and young her throat was. She was only a child; fifteen, maybe.

"How old are you?" I said.

"Eighteen." When she gave the bottle back to me her hand was as thin as a bird's. "I'll be nineteen in November."

"Why did she hit you?" I said. "Down below, just before I knocked."

"For not scrubbing well," she said. She lifted her head and listened, her eyes dark with fright. "Somebody may come," she whispered. She got up and stood poised for a moment, the tip of one finger to her mouth. Then she was gone, like a frightened shadow.

I LAY back on the straw, slowly chewing the bread she had given me, wondering what connection a child like that could have with the Black Rose, and what sort of life she led. Although one didn't need to wonder much about that.

I was half-asleep before I finished the bread. Sleep was coming up like waves of darkness to blot out the moon.

Yet still there was something nagging at my mind. The girl? The girl's bruised cheek? When I'd first seen her there had been something . . . something strange . . . something I ought to remember. About her? I struggled back into wakefulness and tried to think, tried to see what I'd seen there in the kitchen.

It wasn't the girl. It was nothing to do with her. It was something behind her. I could see it now. I could see her thin shoulder in its ragged blue blouse; the curve of her back. And beyond her, on a wooden shelf against the wall, half hidden by a man's jacket thrown over it, there was a radio; a radio in a grey steel case, with a lot of dials; a radio like the sending and receiving sets there are in every police barracks.

Of course. That's why I hadn't noticed it at the time. It was not only my fright, and tiredness. It was familiarity. It was the sort of radio set I saw every day, used every day. And so I hadn't noticed it, except deep down in the bottom of my mind.

Of course. They had a sending and receiving set, capable of monitoring the police messages we sent when we were looking for them. They knew where we were going before we moved.

There wasn't any doubt any more. There were even the first beginnings of proof.

Then sleep came up like a wave, and I sank into it, still seeing the grey, steel-cased radio; and the thin curve of the girl's back. And her eyes, dark as charcoal, full of pity for a stranger.

The wave closed over my head and I was asleep.

I woke to find Leo shaking me. "Up, little

Her face was all gentleness, yet the policeman in me warned: "In a rats' nest there can only be rats. . ."

A torch blinded me from the doorway. It

Americano," he was saying. "Rise and shine."

I saw the big, black-stubbled face like a hacked boulder of ironstone bending over me, felt the hands like grapnels on my shoulders. For a sick, dizzy second I thought that he knew, and that the hands were closing in on my throat. But he was smiling. "Come down and eat, and we'll talk about America," he said.

And for an hour that's what we did. Or at least, he talked, with the sun washing the stone floor of the kitchen with golden dust; with the old woman crouched over her rusty black knitting by the stove as if she'd never moved all night; with Rosa sullen at the table head, and the girl hurrying from the cooking stove to the table and back again with coffee, rolls, cheese from the shelf, or filling both stoves with logs from a pile outside the kitchen door.

And all the time Leo talking, boasting, spinning great stories, as if a dam had broken in his throat; stories of fights and women and golden binges; of rivers of whisky pouring into that giant mouth, while the black-haired hands crushed a roll into shapeless dough or slammed flat on the table, till the delf danced a tattoo and the coffee spilled like brown blood.

I listened in a kind of fascination of horror, because behind the laughter, the open-hearted, childish boasting, there was an empty pit of cruelty. I remembered stories I'd read about this man's rule in these valleys during the war, and found I had no appetite for my coffee and rolls at all. The boasting was a cruel child's boasting, endlessly interested in itself, completely unaware of anything else in the world but its own desires; totally unmoved by anybody else's suffering. And as he talked I could see that even the Rose was afraid of him, watching him like a cat watching a dog.

NEVER have I been more thankful for an hour to end. Amintore tossed the last of half a dozen mugs of coffee down his throat, yawned, stretched, scratched the black fender of hair in the V of his red shirt, and stood up, impossibly tall, his head seeming to scrape the rafters.

"To work, little man," he said. "Can you mend a roof?"

"I . . . yes," I said. "Reckon I can."

"Then mend the roof of the loft," he said. "There's tools and timber in the byre. I'll be away a while. Get it finished before I'm back, and maybe I'll pay you." He gripped my shoulders and lifted, and laughed as he saw the pain and fear in my eyes. "Maybe. And maybe not. But get it done, eh?" He held me close, and there wasn't any laughter in his eyes at all. "And let me hear good things of you when I get back." He let me down. "Look after him," he said to the Rose. "See he's here when I come back."

Was there a double meaning in that? Was he telling her to be my jailer? And I thought of the job he'd given me; on the roof, constantly in view for anybody who wanted to watch me.

"Get going," Leo said. . . .

Should I run for it? Try and escape? But it was too late for that. And so all that morning I readied the timber, cutting shingles from the long, thin planks, finding nails, setting up the ladder. And all the time I felt that I was being watched, felt as if "policeman" were written across my shoulders like a brand.

Around eleven I saw Leo going, striding up the track towards the frontier, an old rucksack swinging from his shoulders and a staff like a club in his hand. An hour later the girl came up the ladder on to the roof, carrying a bucket. In it were wine and bread and cheese and meat.

"The Signora Rosa sent you this," she said.

I MOVED sideways on the roof to let her climb level with me, and watched her come. Her hair was a black mist in the sun, and even her old blue blouse looked beautiful against the moss-brown tiles and the diamond depths of the sky. Her face was like an elf's face, so white and small, with its narrow chin and soft, curving mouth, and huge eyes with the dark smudge shadows of tiredness under them.

"You haven't told me your name," I said.

"Benvenuta," she said.

The welcome one, I thought. *Who has ever welcomed her?*

"My mother was so glad when I was born," she went on, and smiled at the strange thought of it. "That was during the war. Afterwards"—she hesitated and looked away, a deeper shadow on her eyes—"afterwards I was an orphan. I lived with the Sisters of Charity. And then here." She had put the bucket down, between two rungs of the ladder, and was brushing the hair back from her forehead, as if she were glad to be this much free for this small moment.

"And here?" I said. "Has it always been like . . . ?" I nodded towards the dull bruise on her cheek.

She looked faintly surprised, as if she were saying "what other way could life be?"

"*Cosi cosi,*" she said. "The old woman was not so bad when I came first to help her, and we were alone. There was just work, and a man came from the village every day to see to the cows. Then Signor Leo came, and sometimes he was kind and sometimes he was rough. But the man didn't come from the village any more. He was afraid of the Signor Leo, I think. And last year Signora Rosa came. . . ."

She shrugged, as if that explained everything. And in one way it did. This farm must have been one of Leo's hide-outs during the war, and when he had wanted to run his smuggling gang he had come back to it like a feudal baron.

Maybe the old woman who owned the place had wanted to protest. Maybe not. But what could she do? An old woman's neck is easy to wring.

And, finally, the Rose had come back from jail, to find her old leader and something like her old life ready and waiting for her. And Benvenuta, with Leo treating the girl half-kindly, half-roughly; I could imagine jealousy coiling inside the Rose like a whip.

I put out my hand and touched Benvenuta's chin, turning her face towards me. Inside me the policeman said: *Let her be. In a rats' nest there can only be rats. If she's not one of them now, she will be. All that matters is your job.* But sometimes I didn't care for being a policeman.

"Why don't you go away from here?" I asked her. "It isn't a good place. It's certainly no place for a girl like you."

"I know," she whispered. "But where could I go?"

A shout came curling up from below like a whiplash. "Benvenuta! What are you doing?" And I looked down and saw the Rose standing with her legs astride in the yard, her hands on her hips and her head thrown back, her face twisted with anger. Before I could tell her to go, Benvenuta was scuttling down the ladder like a thin, terrified monkey.

"Get inside," shouted the Rose, and the girl ran. The door slammed behind them and I heard the girl cry out. I gripped the hammer in my hands and shut my eyes. *Keep your head,* the policeman whispered. *Nothing matters but the job.*

But it wasn't an easy whisper to obey. Time passed. I stayed on at the farm and, day after day as I worked on the roof, I had to watch her ill-treated and abused; see her staggering across the yard with logs, or buckets of water on a yoke; hearing her before dawn in the byre below me, milking the cows. The first time I went down to help, but she was so afraid of the Rose coming that I had to leave her to do it alone after that. And a hundred times a day I heard the Rose scream at her, saw her cringe away from a blow, until I thought there could be no pleasure in the world as great as shooting *la*

was the Black Rose, and I lifted the steel-boxed radio to throw with all my strength

Rosa Nera straight between her black, furious eyes.

And all the time I was thinking, looking, listening for the proof that I needed; something that I could take back to Captain Pelletti so that we could act, sweep out this rats' nest and mend the hole that Leo and his Rose had gnawed in the frontier. But there was nothing.

There was nothing except the wireless. Half a dozen times I tried to get a closer look at it, but I never could. My meals were brought to me outside by Benvenuta, with no more than a few words and a frightened smile, and the only times I could go into the kitchen at all were to ask for some instruction about the roof, or for more nails. And whenever I did, the radio was completely hidden, just a box under a cloth.

AND then I heard it, late on the seventh night I was there. It was a thin, whistling call sign, followed by the crackle of static as dials were adjusted. I lifted on my elbow in the loft and listened. Nothing. *It was a bat,* I told myself. *Nothing.* But I knew in my heart what it was.

You're afraid, the policeman said inside me. *Afraid to go down. Afraid of the Rose.*

By God I'm not, I lied, and went on my bare feet to the door. The world was like a grave under the moon. I crept across the yard, a straw crackling under my feet, an owl flitting like a black shadow to make me clutch my heart.

I crept closer and closer to the kitchen door, until I could hear a voice. The Rose. "I hear you, Leo, I hear you loud and clear. Tomorrow by the Bida path at moonrise." There was a crackle of static, and then another voice too distorted and far away to catch. Then the Rose again. "Yes, he's still here."

Leo must be asking about me. As a tramp? Or as a spy? What was he saying as his voice whispered again? Watch him? Or kill him?

I swallowed, plastered flat against the wall in case the Rose suddenly opened the door. This was the thing I'd needed. Everything.

And yet, what could I do with it? If I left now to contact the captain, the Rose's suspicions would become certainties the second I was missed. And she could call Leo again, warning him of what had happened, and the Bida path would be empty at moonrise. I would have done nothing but put them trebly on guard.

Unless . . . unless the radio could be put out of action. Once that was done, the Rose would have no way of reaching Leo sooner than the rendezvous at moonrise.

Inside the kitchen the radio whispered, whistled its high bat note, was quiet. I heard footsteps. Why in pity's name had I stayed? Why hadn't I left the door when I had the chance, had what I wanted already?

A hand came on the latch. I flattened myself like paint, like moonlight against the wall. The door creaked open, and the Rose was there, within three yards of me. She had only to turn her head to see me. And I felt that sick weakness that a man might feel if he knew a snake was coiled and poised beside him. You think that's foolishness? That she was only a woman? That I had nothing to be afraid of? I tell you she chilled my heart with evil.

Twice she breathed in the cold night air, lifting her hard, carved face to the moon. Her hair was sleek and black as ebony, her throat full and pale. I was so close to her I could see it pulsing as she breathed, like the throat of a cobra. Then she turned and went in, and I felt my hands sweating, and my knees shaking.

I thought of Benvenuta, day after day under the Rose's hand, and drove the thought away again. There was no room for anything now but the job. I sidled into a patch of deeper shadow and squatted down, listening to the faint sounds of the Rose moving in the kitchen. I heard the shuffle of a bench, an inner door creaking. Then silence.

The moon inched across the black velvet sky, swallowing first one star and then another, only to let others free at her back. Half an hour passed. An hour. *She must be asleep by now.* There was not a sound in the house. Darkness came like a cloak as the moon was hidden.

I stood up, and one of my knees cracked, sounding like a pistol shot in the night stillness. I inched sideways along the wall, hand reaching out to the latch. I think I almost hoped to find it fastened. But it was loose.

I put a slow pressure on the cold iron. With the slow swing of the door inwards my nerves were as tight as steel wires, waiting for a creak.

DARKNESS flooded out of the doorway like a cold tide. *Go in,* said the policeman. *Six steps to the table. Three sideways along the table edge. Then four more to the shelf where the radio is. You remember.*

It was so dark, so still. A burned log fell softly in the stove and I felt a scream rise in my throat. My finger touched the bare wood of the table. I felt along its edge. Now four steps more. Was that a sound? Breathing? Only my own breath.

Two steps. One. The darkness was easing a little as my eyes grew used to it after the moonlight. There was the shelf, with the covered shape of the radio like a dark hummock, crouching. I could feel the pale glimmer of the stove tiles. And something else. A chair by the stove? Somebody sitting?

Don't be a fool, said the policeman. *Only a chair, and shadows.* Then my hand was on the radio cover, softly lifting the cloth. And beside it an empty bottle rolled on the shelf, brushed my frantic fingers, rolled faster, fell. And even before it crashed to the stone flags the shadow in the chair began to scream.

It was the old woman screaming, asleep by the dying stove until I woke her. There came scream on scream and the crash of the bottle falling. I turned to run. *Stop,* said something in my mind. *Stop* . . . and I swung back to the radio, wrenched it from the shelf and lifted it as the inner door of the kitchen slammed open and a torch beam blinded me.

It was the Rose. "Here it comes for you," I whispered, and I lifted the steel box of the radio and threw it at the torch beam with all my strength, all the hatred I felt for her, all the pity for Benvenuta.

As I threw it there was a yellow tulip of flame a yard to the right of the torch. The Rose knew too much to be caught behind a light like that. She was holding the torch at arm's length as she fired. A sledge hammer smashed itself against the side of my head. The light went out, and it was very cold.

To be concluded next week

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A counter revolution is threatening the little shop on the corner. As prices fall it's the housewife who's winning the . . .

Battle of the High Street

by JOHN ENNIS

To many of the three hundred owners of small grocery shops gathered in conference at Hastings on June 11 this year, it seemed as if the enemy was in their camp.

Herman Kent, who was just about to retire from the job of secretary of the National Federation of Grocers' Associations, had predicted that five thousand small grocers would go out of business in the next two years, squeezed out by chains of self-service shops selling branded products at cut-price rates.

Yet here on the rostrum at the Federation's conference stood Willard Garfield Weston, the world's third largest grocer and said to be the world's richest millionaire, ready to tell the little men what to do to be saved. A flamboyant man with the Barnum touch, Weston had once said: "I am the greatest living exponent of enthusiasm in this country."

The assembled grocers were unenthusiastically aware that among Weston's many enterprises was Fine-Fare, a chain of twenty-two self-service shops that was cutting prices to the bone. They had read with distaste, four months before, a list of Fine-Fare prices in a trade paper, *The Grocer*, which showed that forty-six items which they themselves sold for a total of £3 4s. 8½d. could be bought at Fine-Fare for 7s. 3½d. less.

The more aggressive independent grocers had been hitting back at Weston by refusing to sell the biscuits which he manufactures. "I'll tell you," Weston said in his Canadian drawl, "if you keep panning my biscuits the way you are doing I shall have to keep my two sons busy raising a family to eat them all."

The slightly vindictive laughter that followed was cut short when Weston went on: "Seriously, my biscuit business is not one-thirtieth of my total volume of grocery business. If I didn't make another biscuit tomorrow you would not be able to see a fraction of difference in the balance sheets of my companies all over the world."

Helpless before this proof of Weston's power, the small men listened to his plan. His idea was that independent grocers should link themselves to a wholesaler—himself, for instance—in an organization which would buy cheaply in bulk and provide collective advertising and modern shop equipment that could make the small trader more efficient.

The delegates found themselves agreeing, before the conference ended, to a visit to Canada by six of their number, at Weston's expense, to observe similar schemes which he

There's a coffee 'bar (top) in this Crawley supermarket. And as well as food, customers can buy nylons and gramophone records (left)

Cut-price offers are splashed on the window to entice shoppers into the Food Fare self-service store at Clapham (left)

Personal attention is the small man's trump card. Victor Marshall and his wife serve in their own shop at Maida Vale

was operating there. Many went back to their little corner shops wondering if all were lost. For they had also heard their president, Leslie Mower, hint: "Changes of policy may have to be considered in order to secure expansion of our share of the retail trade."

The Federation's policy has always been: "Sell at the price recommended by the manufacturer on all branded goods." A change of policy could only mean cut for cut.

There are about a thousand cut-price grocery shops in Britain, many of them belonging to half a dozen combines. They are concentrated mostly in the Home Counties, where some crowded high streets contain three rival "cutters." Individual grocers cut prices in many provincial towns, and one of the biggest of the London groups is now spreading into the Midlands and along the south coast.

So far the price cutters represent only about one per cent of the total number of grocery shops, but they keep most of the small grocers in a white heat of anger and frustration.

Housewives, fascinated by windows daubed with "Save Money" signs, desert their regular grocers and flock in after the bargains. These include tea cut by 8d. a pound, cereals cut from 1s. 3d. to 1s. 1d. a packet, bottles of fruit squash from 3s. 3d. to 2s. 9d., tins of beans from 1s. to 10½d., tubes of toothpaste from 1s. 10d. to 1s. 8d., "giant" packets of washing powder from 1s. 11d. to 1s. 9d. and toilet paper packs from 1s. to 10d.

The men behind the cut-price chains are more business men than tradesmen. They have the brash, American idea that free enterprise means ruthless competition and they are prepared to use every discovery of psychology that will help to draw more customers into their shops and persuade them to spend money once they are in.

Sydney Ingram, managing director of Anthony Jackson Food Fare, is typical of these new-style grocers. A tall, slim man in rimless spectacles, with an air of quiet alertness, he has a big American car; his wife Sheila has a big British car. Ingram makes full use of his wife's beauty, for publicity, and of her brains, by having her in the firm as his hard-working merchandising director.

Ingram began before the war with a market stall in Walthamstow High Street. Recently he opened his first supermarket at Clapham. He is planning to open twenty more.

Mrs. Ingram says: "A woman can save enough in a year buying in our shops to take her family on a Continental holiday."

The twenty Anthony Jackson Food Fare shops report individual turnovers ranging between £2,000 and £5,000 a week. "We are prepared to work on one and a half per cent net profit," Ingram says. "The small grocer wants four or five per cent net profit. Often he is satisfied with a turnover of £200 a week.

"We sell at the lowest possible price that will show us a profit. It's simple. Take a packet of breakfast cereal. Assume it costs us, as bulk buyers, one shilling. The manufacturer's recommended retail price would be 1s. 3d., which the small grocer charges. We sell at 1s. 1½d. So we have to sell twice as many to make the same profit. We find we can sell more than twice as many at the cut price.

"We have a big warehouse and we buy on the best terms. We save nothing on staff. Though most of our shops are self-service we need just as many people working behind the scenes. We have a staff of about three hundred and fifty. We pay between £1 and £3 a week above the recognized rates. Our managers earn more than those in other stores and promotion is more rapid."

The small grocer is aware that if prices were level he would have a pull that the impersonal self-service shop can never attain. Albert Leslie Walker has a small shop in a side street in Balham, south London. He says: "The public are being turned into machines. They have to lug all their groceries home from the cut-price shops. I deliver seventy orders a week right to the door. Isn't that a service?"

The biggest cut—and to the small grocer, the unkindest—is on tins of instant coffee, slashed from 3s. 6d. to 2s. 9d., sometimes 2s. 8d.

"The cheapest I can possibly buy it wholesale is 2s. 8½d.," says a small grocer.

To encourage high sales the manufacturers offer retailers lower rates if they buy large quantities at a time. A well-known washing powder, for instance, which the manufacturer recommends should be sold at 7d. for a small packet, is sold to the grocer by the case of seventy-two packets.

If he buys one case he pays £1 17s. 7d. If he buys ten cases he gets them at the reduced rate of £1 16s. 6d. a case. If he buys two hundred cases he gets them for £1 15s. 2d. a case. The small grocer can never buy two hundred cases at one time. The owner of a chain always can. Usually, too, he can pay cash within twenty-eight days, which brings him a two-and-a-half

Continued on page 29

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARTHUR WHITTINGTON

Little Gringoire's Last Coup

by WILLIAM BRANDON

IT is true that my old friend Monsieur le Duc's activities as a small-time antique dealer in Cannes occasionally give a regrettable impression of general untrustworthiness, and that most people acquainted with him regard him as a cheap crook and petty swindler with a heart of tarnished brass. But there are exceptions. They're hard to find, and no doubt they live in error, but rare individuals exist who raise hosannahs in his behalf. One such was Pierre Gringoire, the poet.

Little Gringoire was grateful to Monsieur le Duc from the day he died. This is how it came about.

He was a sad-eyed, ragged little character, fifty-some years old. Everyone called him Little Gringoire. A halo of curling white hair gave him the look of an expiring poodle when he had his hat off. When he had his hat on, an ancient black felt hat with a broad brim that buckled his ears, he looked as if he were trying to hide. He also wore a threadbare shepherd's cloak, trousers that were unravelling at the cuffs, and old tennis shoes. He was fond of saying that spiritually he was clad in goatskins, which might have been an improvement.

Most of the time Little Gringoire could be found at the Widow Gizella's café on the Quai St. Pierre. The Widow Gizella, who was ordinarily very sharp with a franc, evidently felt

Little Gringoire's great unhappiness was that nobody recognized his genius. Until someone did, the Widow Gizella gave him wine on tick

ILLUSTRATED BY RICHARD O. ROSE

The lovely Stéphanette had a heart of gold . . . and Monsieur le Duc had always found gold irresistible

Monsieur le Duc took off his hat and held it over his heart. "I have been debating whether to give you this poem of his," he told Mademoiselle Dubois. "It was at his side—at the last"

sorry for him. Or maybe she liked his poetry—anyway, she let him have a glass or two of wine each evening on tick, or as the more descriptive French phrase has it, "on the eye."

In her café Little Gringoire declaimed with gestures on any subject that came up to anyone who would listen, and between conversations wrote verses about his current immortal inspiration. Little Gringoire was always falling in love with some beautiful young woman and writing despairing poems about her. Naturally none of the immortal inspirations thus honoured ever took him seriously. In fact, most of them never knew that Little Gringoire was in love with them at all; and those who did only laughed.

If this made Little Gringoire unhappy, he didn't show it, possibly because the great unhappiness of his life didn't leave any room for second features.

The great unhappiness of his life was his lack of recognition as a poet. A book of his poems had once sold fifteen copies, due to a printing error in the title that caused it to be mistaken by near-sighted punters for a Longchamps tip sheet, but otherwise he had remained all his life a strong contender for the title of the world's most unsuccessful and obscure poet. He tried to sustain himself with a faith that eventually, somehow, his genius would be acknowledged; but in the meantime, as he said miserably, it was bitter not to be attacked by at least one critic.

And then one day Little Gringoire died.

I heard about it from Monsieur le Duc, who was occupied with making the funeral arrangements. Little Gringoire's last request, he said, had been that he might be laid to rest in the cemetery in Varretier, a colourful medieval village up in the mountains that had recently become fashionable as a place for artistic celebrities to be married or buried. Monsieur le Duc was himself going to pay the cemetery fee, and suggested that I furnish the use of my car to assist him in the preliminaries of this worthy enterprise.

MONSIEUR LE DUC said, piously bobbing his Adam's apple: "He was a truly tragic figure. One could at least do this small final service for him."

I agreed that one could, but I was interested in what Monsieur le Duc expected to get out of it. It was not like Monsieur le Duc to volunteer any services, small, final, or otherwise—particularly if they cost him money—without finding an advantage in it for Monsieur le Duc.

"Little Gringoire was my friend," Monsieur le Duc said, not without a certain simple nobility. "Your cynicism grieves me, *mon vieux*. I will confess that he made me the heir to his poetical works, most of which are unpublished; but I'm afraid that they are, unfortunately, worthless."

Unless he was planning to corner the waste-paper market, I had to admit that they probably were, and in this case granted him the benefit of the doubt, although I kept the doubt handy.

Varretier, a little walled town with crooked cobbled streets, looked like something out of an illuminated manuscript. Monsieur le Duc pinned a black band to his sleeve and went first to look over the cemetery, an enclosure outside the walls commanding a view of the green and gold valley that had been much painted by eminent artists, some of whom were now buried there.

We were locating the other celebrated names that had of late turned the place into a rural Westminster Abbey, when we encountered a tall young woman whom Monsieur le Duc introduced to me as Mademoiselle Stéphanette Dubois. She had a timid smile and the rather appealing gracelessness of the very shy. She was dressed—expensively—in black.

"A beautiful site," Monsieur le Duc said in an undertaker's murmur, indicating the surrounding tombstones, which were fulsomely adorned with shiny metal wreaths enclosing photographs of the inhabitants.

"Oh, lovely," Mademoiselle Dubois sighed.

"It will please poor Gringoire," Monsieur le Duc said, taking off his hat and holding it over his heart. "He died as obscurely, alas, as he lived, but here, *enfin*, he will be placed among the renowned and illustrious where he belongs."

Mademoiselle Dubois turned her head away, her lips trembling.

"I have been debating with myself whether to give you this poem of his," Monsieur le Duc said, producing a scrap of paper. "It was at his side—at the last."

Mademoiselle Dubois's eyes were filled with tears and she couldn't read it, so Monsieur le Duc read it for her. It was addressed to Mlle Dubois and went something like this:

THE POET'S COMPLAINT TO PHILOSOPHY

"Nil admirari" your behest,
And I protest I've done my best—
But will this longing ever go,
For my girl beautiful as snow?

My business as European representative of the British Carburettor Company doesn't have much to do with poetry, which may have been the reason the poem didn't bowl me over. But it had quite an effect on Mademoiselle Dubois and Monsieur le Duc. Monsieur le Duc took her in his arms and let her weep on his shoulder, and it was a touching scene, except that I could have sworn I saw him assessing the string of pearls around her neck while he was wiping his eyes.

Presently we went into the village to find the mayor, leaving Mademoiselle Dubois reading the poem again and again and crying in between.

Monsieur le Duc told me she had been Little Gringoire's last love, although she hadn't known it at the time. Little Gringoire had seen her passing in the street and had fallen in love with her, more madly than usual, and had done his finest work, Monsieur le Duc said, writing poems about her. Mademoiselle Dubois was much affected by it all, now that it was too late, and the whole thing was, as I could see, quite sad.

It was also, I thought, somewhat surprising, as Mademoiselle Dubois was an altogether different type from most of Little Gringoire's inspirations, who were as a rule prettier, blonder, and given to wisecracks. However, tastes change.

The mayor of Varretier, a fat man in dusty blue work clothes and a beret, professed himself puzzled by Monsieur le Duc's request for a permit to bury Little Gringoire in the Varretier cemetery.

He said: "Do you mock me, Monsieur?"

Monsieur le Duc, affronted, said: "Not intentionally, Monsieur."

"Is it possible you are unaware of the action taken by our municipal council last week, reserving the use of our cemetery henceforward only to those who are bona fide residents of Varretier?"

"Indeed?" Monsieur le Duc said. "I understood that within the past summer you had

I've always wanted a tricycle shed in the garden.

The whole place would have to be redecorated. Did you see the wallpaper in the big bedroom? I felt as if I was trapped in a swamp.

At least it was brighter than the stained glass. Khaki and seaweed green—ugh!

I liked that little room, though—you know, the one where she tried to hide the gin bottles.

That's the butler's pantry. Willie could do his homework there, away from the television.

The old gentleman upstairs gave me the creeps. He seemed to be trying to gnash his teeth, only he hadn't any. They say he lost a fortune suing lawyers.

I bet he was a devil on a tricycle.

Mind you, it's a nice *big* house. We could do a lot with it.

Sure. If we knew a couple of dozen witches we could hold a whist drive.

What were those funny noises we heard in the cellar—like fuses blowing?

Mouse traps going off, I expect.

How awful!

Well, what's the next address?

That old house on Park Road. I've always wanted to see over it—it's where the man got two years for bigamy, remember?

E. S. TURNER

Pets

Dogs bark,
Cats mew,
Canaries chirp,
Chickens too.

Rabbits crunch,
Pigeons swish. . . .
Nice, quiet
Goldfish.

RICHARD ARMOUR

Foreign Affairs

Orv Thompson caught an eight-pound trout in the Flinflon, Manitoba, annual fishing festival. Deciding his catch was too small to win a prize, he took it home and had it for dinner. He ate himself out of £90. The trout which took second prize weighed just under eight pounds.

Degli Occhi, an Italian criminal lawyer, felt a tap on the shoulder in a crowded Milan bus. He turned and the man next to him handed him his wallet, saying, "I apologize, Signor. I did not at first recognize you." The lawyer had defended the man sometime before and secured his acquittal—on a charge of picking pockets.

Accused of the illegal sale of fireworks in her Chicago grocery store, Mrs. Lillian Williams insisted in court that they were quite harmless. The judge opened one of the packets to see for himself—and the contents exploded in his face.

It's An Ill Wind . . .

Why do my apples
ripen, harden,
and fall each year
in my neighbour's garden?

But sadder still,
the thought that grieves
and causes me to pine,
his trees shed leaves
which every breeze
blows billowing into mine!

NOEL A. JONES

The Book And I

If baby cries when you leave the room, says the book brightly, *go back and explain things in a calm and friendly way. When he knows why you have to go, he won't mind.*

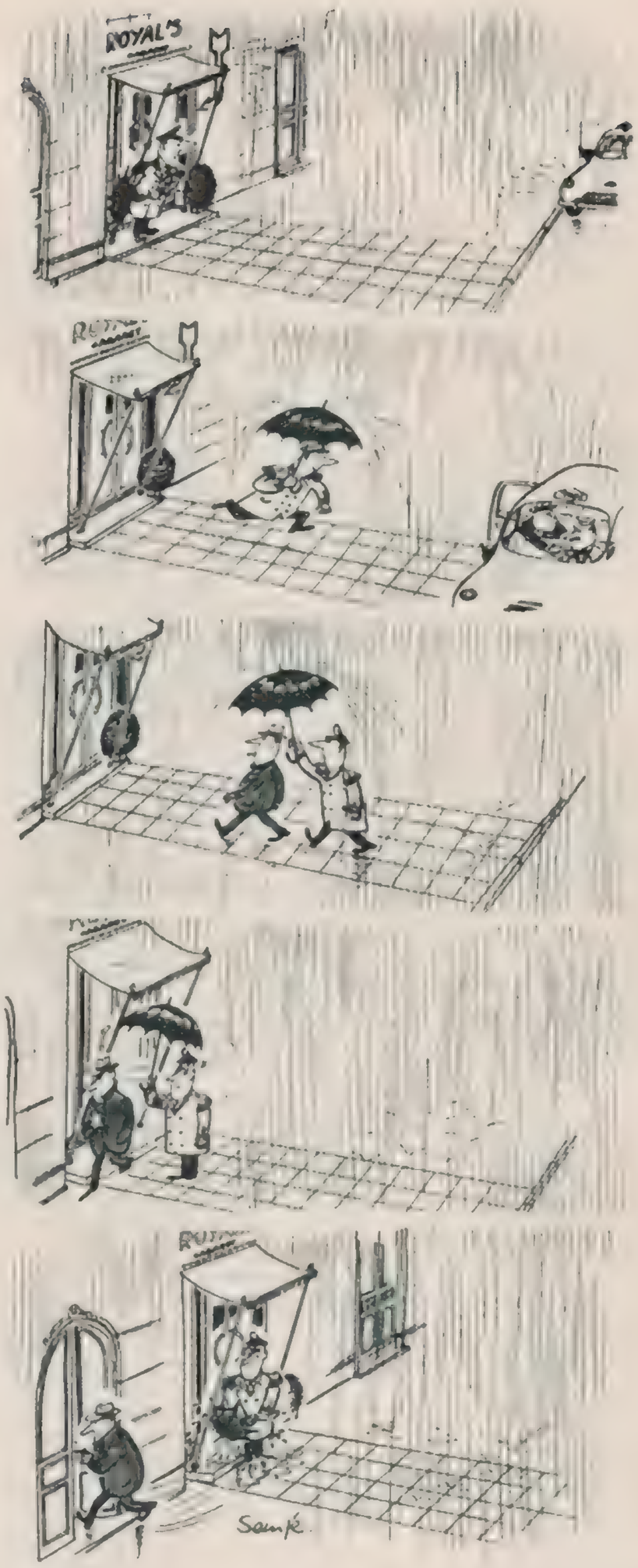
Hum. The baby cried. So I went back, leaving the oven door open. "Look," I said, all calm and friendly, "I have to leave you for a moment, or the telephone will ring before I've put the meat in, and I'll be stuck with old Mrs. N. who never stops. And by the time I've said goodbye five times and rudely hung up, your stewed prunes will have burned away to nothing and it will be too late to dash down to the bank before it shuts. Then I shan't have any money to do the weekend shopping, including some more prunes and a packet of suet to make Daddy's absolutely favourite pudding."

The baby stopped crying and stared at me with an expression of intense scepticism. As I left him to ponder, he started yelling again. Obviously I hadn't explained enough. I went back. "Listen," I said, "it may well be that the root cause of my proposed action is a latent fear that Daddy might be very cross if he comes home and finds there is no lunch and nothing to eat until Monday."

The baby wasn't even listening. He was stuffing cotton wool into his mouth. I took it out. "So you see," I went on, "all this may end in the disruption of your happy home environment, which may in its turn have a highly damaging effect on your delicate emotional system, leading you into wild ways in your teens, and possibly ruining your chances of a happy marriage and steady job."

The baby understood. He opened his mouth and howled as he had never howled before. "Please," I said. The telephone rang.

DAPHNE BOUTWOOD



said inside. "You're as wet as a cod-fish—you'll have to change. I watched you coming, Simon. I don't know how you do it."

"Easy," he said. And he thought: *I wasn't really scared back there; not really.* He went upstairs and dried himself and changed. The windows rattled. The rain drummed on the glass. He went downstairs again.

It was cold ham for lunch, and lemon pie. The old house shivered and shook in the wind. Simon dried dishes; Jennifer did the non-breakables. "Some wind!" he said. *World's funny,* he thought. *So quiet just about an hour ago at Jim's and now. . . .*

"The rain is like a million bucketfuls at once," said Jennifer.

"The weatherman said it would be heavy for an hour or two," Mum said. " 'High pressure,' he said, and us at the edge of it or something."

"*Low* pressure, Mum, not *high.* Gosh, everyone knows that."

"Not me," she said. "I'm only a dumb housewife woman. You scientists in pants, why you're the pressure cookers." He laughed at Mum's crazy way of saying things. He hoped she was not going to talk to him about school and that. He finished his chores. The wind was stronger every minute. He escaped to switch on the radio in the living-room.

The static was terrible. He spun the knob and heard a voice: "Hurricane Anna has changed direction. Warning for all. . . ." Simon did not hear the rest of what the man was saying. The radio went dead. . . .

At about that time Robert Hall, Colonel. U.S. Air Force, had rounded Boston on Route 128, four and a half hours out, half-way. He had run through heavy rain, but that had stopped. The overcast was dense; the crosswind difficult at speed.

Robert Hall was troubled. He could not help having to fly to the coast tonight. What troubled him was that he had left Mary to do a thing he should have done himself—tell Simon.

"I'd better just check again," he said aloud. An hour ago, Anna was a hundred and fifty miles below Nova Scotia, moving roughly east, but slower; for these latitudes a hurricane of small diameter and great intensity. He had placed it on his mental map . . . more than two hundred miles from Tannahac—the centre, that was—and going away. All well—with a professional pilot's reservation that the only good hurricane was a dead one.

Boston came in strong. He listened, and then he cursed himself. "Lucky Hall," they called him. "Lucky Hall" who left his wife, blind son, and daughter. . . .

Wheelspin on the grass dividing strip, U-turn completed, one hundred and eighty degrees. Hurricane Anna had switched direction a hundred and ten, heading fast for Augusta, Maine; and that put Tannahac in the centre of its path.

The speedometer needle swung; the announcer spoke on . . . gusts of a hundred . . . rainfall twenty inches or more . . . acute flood danger, all low-lying areas, coastal and inland. *Twenty inches,* he thought. *Or thirty. What could that do to Tannahac Lake, the reservoir. . . .*

The power failed about one; and now it was four, and the wind still grew. You wouldn't believe that the wind could still be growing, but it was. It thundered and screamed and bashed the house.

Simon read a bit in braille, but his fingers were stupid with the noise. "Why not practise on your buzzer, Simon?"

It was a battery-buzzer. *What'll I send?* he thought, and he did an alphabet. And then he sent: "S-I-M-O-N H-A-L-L" about ten times; he could not think of anything else to send.

"What are you sending, darling?"

"Oh, nothing," he said. He stopped.

Mum read to Jennifer and the wind was loud. The wind, the thunder and the rain made one huge sound together. She read a story called *The Little Engine That Could,* a small kid's story, but Simon listened; and then there was a crashing smashing of broken glass, and wind and rain in the living-room.

He held his handkerchief to his cheek. Mum tried to nail a board across the window where a pane was broken, but it wouldn't stay, and the

made our toytown railway pay

The Talyllyn railway's third locomotive, Sir Haydn, prepares to pull out of Abergynolwyn station. Last year the line carried a total of 56,000 passengers

ONE evening in August, 1951, passengers on the Talyllyn Railway peered anxiously from their carriages. The train had come to a sudden stop, midway between two stations, and the scene on either side was one of desolation. On the right was a steep hill; to the left trees, bushes and dense undergrowth.

As the passengers watched, the engine driver and fireman leaped from their cab. The guard ran from his van to join them. After a hurried conference they sprinted up the hillside as though the eighty-six year old engine were about to explode.

This was the railway's first season under the management of the Talyllyn Railway Preservation Society. Its membership was formed of amateur railway enthusiasts like myself, and we had not then mastered all the primitive equipment at our disposal.

On this occasion the large wooden water tank which was our only source of locomotive water supply at Towyn was to blame. Although connected to the town supply, there was no valve in the tank to cut off the inflow when it was full. This meant that the supply tap had to be turned on and off as required.

On this particular evening Dai Jones, the engine driver, had forgotten to turn on the tap in time. Rather than wait until the tank filled, he had taken what he thought was just enough water to reach the next station. Half-way there the engine's water tank had run almost dry.

To the passengers' relief, the crew returned over the brow of the hill, and shortly afterwards they heard the reassuring sound of the engine putting on steam. They discovered later that the crew had visited a farm at the top of the hill, borrowed buckets from the farmer, and replenished the engine's boiler with water from a nearby stream.

Such incidents were not uncommon in our early days at Talyllyn. Built in 1865 to carry slate from the mountain quarries to the sea, and to provide a passenger service between Towyn and Abergynolwyn, Merionethshire, the railway had been allowed to deteriorate after the quarries closed in 1946. By then the seven miles of track were almost hidden by weeds.

Tourists still used it in the summer, however, and its owner, Sir Haydn Jones, Liberal M.P. for Merioneth, vowed that he would keep the railway running as long as he lived. Then, in 1950, Sir Haydn died. The railway seemed destined to die with him.

It was in the winter of that year that I first heard of the attempt to save the railway. Tom Rolt, an author, called a meeting of railway enthusiasts in the Imperial Hotel, Birmingham. I attended. Afterwards, Rolt, myself, Pat Garland, an accountant, and several others interested in the venture met in Garland's office to put the whole idea down on paper. We had all visited the railway within the past year. We knew that to put the line in order would cost more than £15,000. We could not afford to pay for it ourselves.

We decided to form a committee. A radio dealer from Banbury was elected chairman, and Garland treasurer. Other members included a local authority architect, a director of an engineering firm, a clerk in the Ministry of Transport, and a metallurgical chemist.

Our first move was successful. We approached Lady Haydn, who agreed to hand over all her shares to a holding company without payment. The oldest surviving steam narrow gauge passenger-carrying railway in the world was ours.

Now that we had the railway, the problem was what we were going to do with it. Nobody had ever thought of trying to save a railway before, and we had nobody to guide us.

Our first task was to obtain some money. Two thousand leaflets were printed and distributed to people in the professional railway world and to those interested in railways. Anxiously we waited for their reaction.

The first response was encouraging, and by March, 1951, we had nearly three hundred members, each of whom was charged £1 in return for a vote at the annual general meeting and free travel on the railway.

As news of what we were attempting spread, our funds improved. By the end of the first season we had received £652 in ordinary subscriptions, £840 from life membership subscriptions, and donations totalling £903. An engineering society in North America sent us five hundred dollars (£178).

The first survey which we made of our property was not so encouraging. Of the two original locomotives, one was a complete write-off. It needed a new boiler and firebox, its cylinders needed renewing, and it leaked steam all over the place. The other engine was still serviceable, but would not stand up to much hard wear.

Then we had a piece of luck. The old Corris railway farther down the coast had had two engines lying idle since 1948, but the Western Region of British Railways had set their price at £65 each. Tom Rolt decided to visit the officials and explain what we were trying to do. They became so interested in our project that they let us have both engines for £50.

We were now determined to re-open the

Continued on page 30

Talyllyn was the basis for a film comedy, *The Titfield Thunderbolt*. Its supporters have made it a commercial proposition

SO LET US

by DAVID WALKER

ILLUSTRATED BY OSTRICK

A BIG jet rumbled over the sky. Simon saw himself. Captain Simon Hall, dials glowing, instruments ticking—night-liner captain, one hour out and five to London, a hundred travellers in his care.

He came back from that flight, and a frog was croaking a double croak. *Not you,* it croaked. The frog stopped croaking in the swamp. It was a specially quiet night, so still that he could hear the river, and much too hot for sleep.

He turned on the radio by his bed. He listened to far off, quiet rock 'n' roll, and then a man said: "Here is the latest on Hurricane Anna." He said that the death roll in Bermuda was at least two hundred, but Anna was headed well out to sea, and there was no cause for alarm on the New England coast.

Simon switched off. Hurricane Anna did not seem too real in the quiet here, but it was real all right, a few hundred miles away. Simon shivered. Hurricanes were great huge winds, and he hated winds. You couldn't hear or smell or feel or anything in a wind.

The winds in Anna were a hundred miles an hour, the man had said, and added: "This first one of the season is a corker." But Anna was staying out at sea.

They were talking downstairs. He tiptoed out and sat on the top step, not hearing what they said, and not wanting to. The sound of their voices was like a part of the old wooden house, like company for him in the dark.

And then the telephone rang.

Dad crossed the hall and shut the door. There was a long-distance sort of wait, and then Dad talked. Simon sat out of sight from down below, ready to pop back to bed.

But his father, Colonel Robert Hall, did not come up. He went to the living-room door and said: "So much for my weekend. Conference, Tuesday morning on the coast. That means I fly from La Guardia tomorrow night."

"Oh, Robert, can't they ever let you alone?"

"It's the nature of the job," he said. Dad had some very important sort of air force job. "They would have sent a plane for me, but there's no flying tomorrow."

"The hurricane?"

"Yes," he said. "It's miles away, but hurricanes have long tentacles. I'll have to take the car. I'm sorry, Mary; just one of those things."

Simon heard his mother sigh, and she said: "Just one of those things that never seem to stop. The air force is your family, not us."

Dad said nothing.

"I didn't mean that, Bob. I know it's not your fault. But tomorrow of all days—when you were going to talk to Simon. Who's to do it now? Do I have to tell the truth to Simon?"

"*Sssh*, Mary. He might be awake."

The truth to Simon. Simon stood up, his hand on the rail at the top of the stairs. He turned for bed because he wanted not to hear; but he had to hear; he went four steps down, his bare toes knowing the quiet places on the steps. He listened.

"Why did we raise his hopes? I never wanted to."

"Carruthers said: 'As long as there's hope, then let him hope.' "

"Do *I* have to tell him? Couldn't we wait till Washington for you to do it? I may be comfort and fun and so on for him; but you're his man in trouble."

"Carruthers said: 'Tell him at Tannahac, the one place he really knows. Give him a week to adjust himself.' "

"And that boarding school—why does he have to go so soon?"

"Carruthers said——"

"If you say 'Carruthers said' just once again, I'll scream."

"He says they have to be properly taught by specialists. Simon's perfectly healthy, he says. They're very happy there, he says."

"Simon won't be. He'll hate every minute of it. Besides, haven't I learned with Simon, and taught him properly?"

"Yes, darling, of course you have." Dad's voice was slow and deep and patient. "You've been wonderful. But it's wearing you out. You can't be tied to the house for ever."

"I can, I can. I never want to leave the house. Why can't you understand? Why do you have to be so hard and cruel?"

There was a pause down there; and then Dad, who was a kind, uncruel man, said: "Are you thinking of yourself, or Simon?"

Simon went up the stairs and into his room and closed the door without a sound, and got into bed and thought: *They've just been pretending I'd get better. They knew it all along. I'm no use to anyone.*

Simon saw the things that he would never see and do. He saw the jet planes in the sky. He saw trout rising on the stream. He saw a bike. He saw many things from the time before his eyes stopped working, which was two years ago, when he was nine.

When Simon was ten, he could see a bit again. Then it was worse. Now he was blinder than any bat, for keeps—that was what Mum would try to tell him tomorrow. Well, he wouldn't let her tell him. And another thing—he wasn't going away to any school.

The frog still croaked in the quiet night. He heard the river, a small sound, flowing on, and he heard waves breaking at the shore. The waves were louder as Simon went to sleep. . . .

"What time is it, Dad?" There were five ponies in his dream, five boys on five ponies in a field.

"It's after eight, old sleepyhead. Wake up!"

"I'm awake," he said. "What kind of a morning is it?" It was a muggy, heavy-feeling morning; that was how it felt to him.

"Overcast. The glass is down to twenty-nine point two." Being a pretty famous pilot, Dad always watched the weather. "Some heavy rain, they say, and thirty-mile winds in the afternoon. That's the tips of Hurricane Anna's fingers, Simon. But Anna heads east by north away from us—and that means no excuse for me to stay. I have to fly to the coast tonight."

Then Simon remembered. He remembered: *The air force is your family, not us;* and everything. "Sorry, son," he heard his father say. "Just can't be helped. You'll have to look after the women for me."

He put a hand on Simon's head, and gave his hair a ruffle, but Simon shook his head away. He was thinking: *Me look after anyone?* And then he thought: *If Dad would just stay today, it wouldn't be too bad; and we could practise on the buzzer, too, and. . . .*

"Keep on with the Morse code, Simon. That's a useful thing." It was funny how Dad often seemed to think of the same things you were thinking. "What are you reading and sending now?"

"Reading ten, sending around twelve."

THERE was a pause. Simon sensed his father standing near him, and uneasy. Then Dad said: "You all right? No aches and pains?"

He shook his head. No aches and pains.

"There's a man," said Dad in his soldier's voice, and said goodbye until next week, and went downstairs.

Simon dressed. The station wagon drove away. Fried flounder fillets was the breakfast smell. He and Dad had caught twelve flounders in the bay. Simon was as good at it as Dad, except for

From the deep, warm darkness c

sounds which Simon knew a

betray him now—by passing on the

SHINE

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bitter truth?

taking out the hooks. "Simon, you didn't brush your hair," his mother said. He did that, and came back to eat his cereal.

"Do be more careful, darling. You're slopping it around."

"No, thanks," he said about the flounder fillets. "Don't like flounder."

"Me, too," said Jennifer. "I hate old flounder."

"You had three the last time," Mum said to him. "Besides," she said, "you can't catch them unless you eat them. That isn't right."

"Sure can't eat 'em unless you catch 'em," Simon said. "T'ain't right neither."

Giggles across the table. "Gosh, you're funny," Jennifer said. But Mum said he wasn't funny. He had a slice of bread and strawberry jam instead of flounder. He wished he had had flounder.

"What's on this morning, darling?"

"Got a job with Jim Kent," he said.

"All right, but be back by twelve. We'll have to . . . I want to talk about plans and things this afternoon."

Plans for school and what the doctor said. He grunted.

"Please, Mummy, could I go, too?"

"No," she said. "One Jim Kent vocabulary in the family is enough. Go as far as the bridge, and send her right back, Simon, and don't forget your coat in case it rains."

"Fuss, fuss," he said. "Okay."

He and Jennifer went along the road. Jennifer was nearly six, still young enough to hold a hand. "It's a funny-feeling sort of day," she said. "The sky is sort of a muddy colour everywhere all over."

The air was still and warm like a bathroom after you have had a bath. The smell of the sea was strong. The sounds were loud and close and hanging in the air. He heard two blue-jays crying. *Blue-jay on the hill, brings water to the mill;* that was one of Jim Kent's sayings.

"Old slowcoach, why are you hanging back?"

"I was just trying it," said Jennifer. "Me with my eyes tight shut. or almost nearly, and you take me right along. I don't see how you do it, not exactly."

"It's easy," he said. "The middle of the road is higher, like a hump; I stay on that; and I know how far to the places I know."

"You won't have to soon, when your eyes are right again. But gosh, Simon, even then you'll still see much better than other people in the dark."

THEY walked a bit. They came to the river. Jennifer saw two trout from the bridge. "Home now, funny-face," he said.

"You're a funny-face," she said.

He listened to her running back. Then he went on. The other bank of the Tannahac River was much higher. He climbed. Here was the big white pine, he knew by feel and smell and answering sound. It was easy at Tannahac Point beside the river, above the sea.

It was easy because he knew it all before. They never went back to other places he had known before—flying nomads, that was what Dad said about them, changing air force jobs and homes.

But most of the summers that Simon could remember they had come to Tannahac Point in the State of Maine. The house stood alone. Jim Kent at the highway was their nearest neighbour.

Now a breeze came rushing. It came from the sea and through the spruces and across the road where Simon was walking. The squall came over and went away, and the air was still again.

Cars passed on the highway up ahead. One stopped at the service station. Simon heard the pump motor running, and Jim Kent's voice. That was fine, Jim not off somewhere. Simon stopped to listen to a bird. It sang at tree-top angle, moving about. He knew the red-eyed vireo's song, the one you might mix up with a robin.

"Hiya, shipmate!"

"Hi, Jim! What's cookin'?"

"I'd say a blow. Goddam weatherman says not." Jim made a good round juicy-sounding spit about the goddam weatherman. "The colonel, your dad, stopped by for gas. Off to the coast, he says, poor fellah. Them air force brass, they sure do monkey around the nation."

"Sure do, Jim," he said.

"Want to work on that bike again?"

"Yeah," he said. "Back wheel and chain was next."

"Okay then, here she is! Now listen, shipmate." Jim told him what to undo and what to do to fit the wheel and chain. Jim had a sideline making old bikes into new. Jim had about a hundred sidelines. He was terrific.

SIMON worked. Two cars came for gas. One old rattle squeaker, one with a radio switched on. Hurricane still moving out and away. Heavy rain to be expected; gale warnings Eastport—that was farther up the coast. Clear of this area by 6 p.m.

He was pretty slow at it. "Finished, Jim," he called, and Jim came over. He said the chain was a hair too tight, and the wheel not true. "Fix that, 'n she'll be a first-rate job."

Another car. "Portland, lady? First right, second left, and take the parkway. Me? Hell, I wish I could, but Momma's right up there, keepin' tabs on me from that window. 'Bye, then, Honey! Jeeze," said Jim. "What a dish that was."

"See here, Jim Kent, ah'm warnin' you. Ah won't have no flirtin' around with no loose women, you bold bad sailor, you. This ain't Manila." Mrs. Kent gave a big fat scolding growl, and closed the window.

"That's fine now, shipmate, a dandy job. I gotta calm the wife, and get spruced up. Gotta drivin' job to do. You spell me at the pumps a minute?"

"Sure," he said. He sat down on the concrete place between the pumps, and he was thinking that he wished he could stay at Tannahac always.

A warm damp wind blew over and died, and blew again from the east. *Go away, you goddam hurricane!* he thought with a shiver, Jim Kent language.

Here came a car. "Hi!" he said. "Regular or super?"

"Super," the stranger said. "Fill her up, son." Then the man said: "Oh," and showed him, and he filled her up. "How much?" Simon said.

"Three, seventeen," the stranger said.

"Oil and water?"

"They're okay." The man gave him three bills, a dime, a nickel and two pennies.

"I'll just get your windshield," Simon said, and did.

"Thanks a lot," said the man. "Top service." He drove away. He seemed like a decent guy.

"Here's the money, Jim. Three, seventeen, he said."

"That's right," said Jim. "Now let's see: hour 'n half at fifty an hour is seventy-five, plus five per cent on sales makes ninety, add sea duty pay. Here, shipmate, wages, a dollar even."

"Oh gee, I told you last time, Jim, I don't want wages. It isn't work. It's fun."

"Sure work is fun, as Mabel said to the bos'n's mate. T'aint the point. Point is you earned every cent, and so did Mabel. Know what I said to your dad this mornin'?"

"What, Jim?"

"Colonel, sir to you, I says, that boy has the mechanic's touch. I'd take him on any time."

"Gosh, Jim, do you think I could? I mean work here steady always?"

Pause. "Summer vacations? Why sure you can."

"I meant . . ." he began to say. But here came Mrs. Kent with milk and cookies. The cookies were all right. The wind was stronger. "What's the latest on Anna?" asked Jim Kent.

"Dawdlin' along away." Mrs. Kent was a southern girl Jim had met up with in the navy. She was a comfortable slow-speaking lady, decent, same as Jim.

"Thanks a lot, Mrs. Kent," he said, and he gave her back the glass.

"I'd better hoist anchor. Gotta tycoon to drive to Boston. Drop you home, shipmate?"

"I guess I'll walk," he said.

Jim sniffed. "Better be quick, rain's coming. Y'know," he said slowly, "they may say Anna's goin' to fade away off Newfoundland, but I don't like the smell of it. What do you say, honey?"

"Feels like a storm to me."

"'Bye, Jim," Simon said. "'Bye, Mrs. Kent."

"Shipmate!"

"Yes, Jim?" He was thinking again he just wished he could stay here always and work for Jim; but *summer vacations. . . .*

"Listen now! I'm going to be away till late. The wind don't matter in that house; it's strong and no trees right near. The sea don't matter; you're forty foot up. But the river now. . . . So say to your mum from me: if there's a helluva Noah's ark of rain, come over quick. Old Tannahac Lake might bust her britches."

"Okay," he said. He started for home. He was not thinking about floods or whatever it was that Jim had been saying. He was thinking: *Dad was in for gas this morning. Dad must have told about school and everything to Jim. That was why Jim sort of hesitated and then said "Summer vacations." Jim doesn't really think I could be a mechanic. Jim was cheering me up, that's what. Jim couldn't use me either.*

The rain began as he crossed the bridge. He heard the blue-jays' cry again. The wind was blowing harder. The rain beat at his face and ran down his neck. It was different from ordinary rain. This rain was warmer than the wind that brought it from the east.

Simon hurried. The wind and the rain drowned everything. They drowned his private radar-sonar system. He got no echoes now from things nearby. The wind and rain muddled him. He tripped and stumbled and stood again and shivered in the warm and cruel wind and rain. *This way? That way? Run! Steady, steady.* Then he found the hump or crown of the road; Simon walked on.

A door opened. "Darling," she

In Short

Or Nearest Offer

Well, thanks awfully for letting us see over your house. It's most attractive. My husband and I will have to talk it over. Goodbye. . . . Gosh, John, did you ever see anything like it? I'm sure there were bats in the scullery.

You'd think they'd have taken down the black-outs by now, wouldn't you?

There seemed to be a queer smell everywhere. Like dead bluebells.

I suppose the air raid shelter was the fifth bedroom.

And that geyser. It made a noise like an Espresso. I should leap out of the bath and run.

Mind you, I liked the tricycle shed. Funny thing.

Starke's Holiday Guide Book

"Tips often cause trouble. Give too much if in doubt"

I've always wanted a tricycle shed in the garden.

The whole place would have to be redecorated. Did you see the wallpaper in the big bedroom? I felt as if I was trapped in a swamp.

At least it was brighter than the stained glass. Khaki and seaweed green—ugh!

I liked that little room, though—you know, the one where she tried to hide the gin bottles.

That's the butler's pantry. Willie could do his homework there, away from the television.

The old gentleman upstairs gave me the creeps. He seemed to be trying to gnash his teeth, only he hadn't any. They say he lost a fortune suing lawyers.

I bet he was a devil on a tricycle.

Mind you, it's a nice *big* house. We could do a lot with it.

Sure. If we knew a couple of dozen witches we could hold a whist drive.

What were those funny noises we heard in the cellar—like fuses blowing?

Mouse traps going off, I expect.

How awful!

Well, what's the next address?

That old house on Park Road. I've always wanted to see over it—it's where the man got two years for bigamy, remember?

E. S. TURNER

Pets

Dogs bark,
Cats mew,
Canaries chirp,
Chickens too.

Rabbits crunch,
Pigeons swish. . . .
Nice, quiet
Goldfish.

RICHARD ARMOUR

Foreign Affairs

Orv Thompson caught an eight-pound trout in the Flinflon, Manitoba, annual fishing festival. Deciding his catch was too small to win a prize, he took it home and had it for dinner. He ate himself out of £90. The trout which took second prize weighed just under eight pounds.

Degli Occhi, an Italian criminal lawyer, felt a tap on the shoulder in a crowded Milan bus. He turned and the man next to him handed him his wallet, saying, "I apologize, Signor. I did not at first recognize you." The lawyer had defended the man sometime before and secured his acquittal—on a charge of picking pockets.

Accused of the illegal sale of fireworks in her Chicago grocery store, Mrs. Lillian Williams insisted in court that they were quite harmless. The judge opened one of the packets to see for himself—and the contents exploded in his face.

It's An Ill Wind . . .

Why do my apples
ripen, harden,
and fall each year
in my neighbour's garden?

But sadder still,
the thought that grieves
and causes me to pine,
his trees shed leaves
which every breeze
blows billowing into mine!

NOEL A. JONES

The Book And I

If baby cries when you leave the room, says the book brightly, *go back and explain things in a calm and friendly way. When he knows why you have to go, he won't mind.*

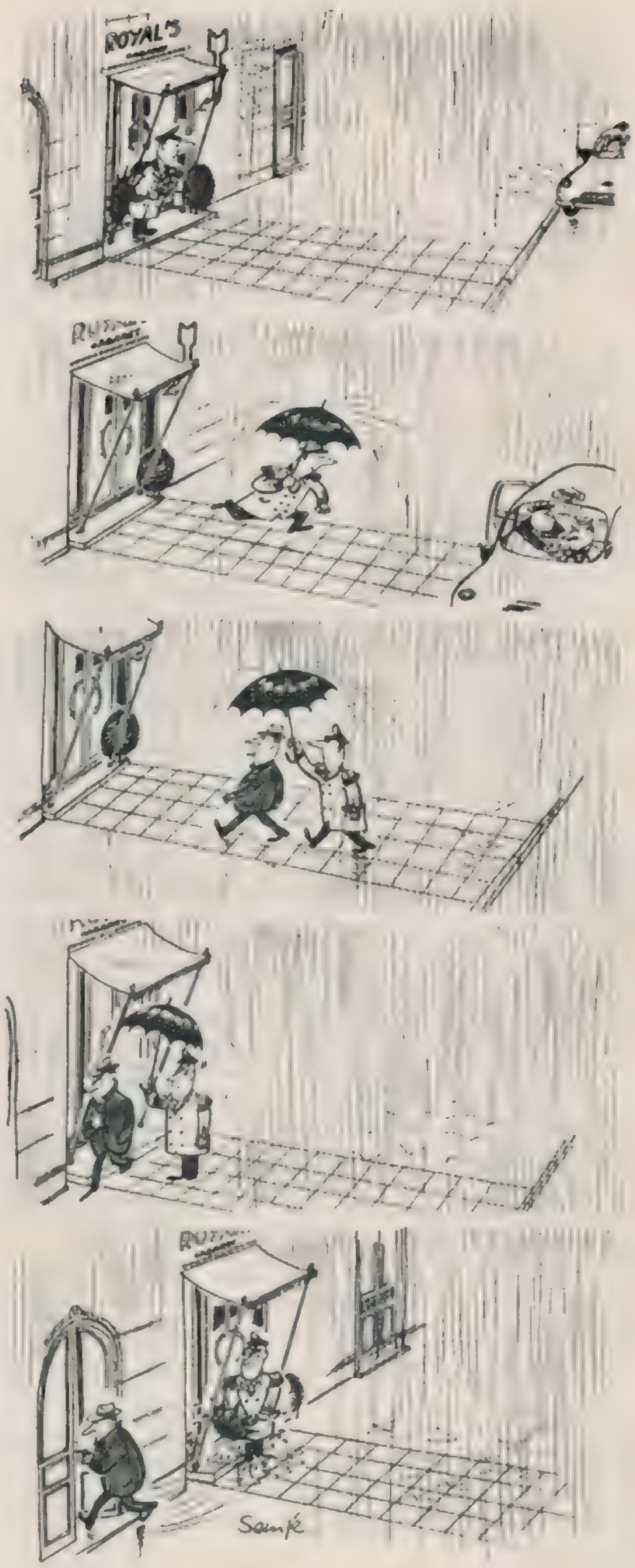
Hum. The baby cried. So I went back, leaving the oven door open. "Look," I said, all calm and friendly, "I have to leave you for a moment, or the telephone will ring before I've put the meat in, and I'll be stuck with old Mrs. N. who never stops. And by the time I've said goodbye five times and rudely hung up, your stewed prunes will have burned away to nothing and it will be too late to dash down to the bank before it shuts. Then I shan't have any money to do the weekend shopping, including some more prunes and a packet of suet to make Daddy's absolutely favourite pudding."

The baby stopped crying and stared at me with an expression of intense scepticism. As I left him to ponder, he started yelling again. Obviously I hadn't explained enough. I went back. "Listen," I said, "it may well be that the root cause of my proposed action is a latent fear that Daddy might be very cross if he comes home and finds there is no lunch and nothing to eat until Monday."

The baby wasn't even listening. He was stuffing cotton wool into his mouth. I took it out. "So you see," I went on, "all this may end in the disruption of your happy home environment, which may in its turn have a highly damaging effect on your delicate emotional system, leading you into wild ways in your teens, and possibly ruining your chances of a happy marriage and steady job."

The baby understood. He opened his mouth and howled as he had never howled before. "Please," I said. The telephone rang.

DAPHNE BOUTWOOD



said inside. "You're as wet as a cod-fish—you'll have to change. I watched you coming, Simon. I don't know how you do it."

"Easy," he said. And he thought: *I wasn't really scared back there; not really.* He went upstairs and dried himself and changed. The windows rattled. The rain drummed on the glass. He went downstairs again.

It was cold ham for lunch, and lemon pie. The old house shivered and shook in the wind. Simon dried dishes; Jennifer did the non-breakables. "Some wind!" he said. *World's funny,* he thought. *So quiet just about an hour ago at Jim's and now. . . .*

"The rain is like a million bucketfuls at once," said Jennifer.

"The weatherman said it would be heavy for an hour or two," Mum said. "'High pressure,' he said, and us at the edge of it or something."

"*Low* pressure, Mum, not *high*. Gosh, everyone knows that."

"Not me," she said. "I'm only a dumb housewife woman. You scientists in pants, why you're the pressure cookers." He laughed at Mum's crazy way of saying things. He hoped she was not going to talk to him about school and that. He finished his chores. The wind was stronger every minute. He escaped to switch on the radio in the living-room.

The static was terrible. He spun the knob and heard a voice: "Hurricane Anna has changed direction. Warning for all. . . ." Simon did not hear the rest of what the man was saying. The radio went dead. . . .

At about that time Robert Hall, Colonel. U.S. Air Force, had rounded Boston on Route 128, four and a half hours out, half-way. He had run through heavy rain, but that had stopped. The overcast was dense; the crosswind difficult at speed.

Robert Hall was troubled. He could not help having to fly to the coast tonight. What troubled him was that he had left Mary to do a thing he should have done himself—tell Simon.

"I'd better just check again," he said aloud. An hour ago, Anna was a hundred and fifty miles below Nova Scotia, moving roughly east, but slower; for these latitudes a hurricane of small diameter and great intensity. He had placed it on his mental map . . . more than two hundred miles from Tannahac—the centre, that was—and going away. All well—with a professional pilot's reservation that the only good hurricane was a dead one.

Boston came in strong. He listened, and then he cursed himself. "Lucky Hall," they called him. "Lucky Hall" who left his wife, blind son, and daughter. . . .

Wheelspin on the grass dividing strip, U-turn completed, one hundred and eighty degrees. Hurricane Anna had switched direction a hundred and ten, heading fast for Augusta, Maine; and that put Tannahac in the centre of its path.

The speedometer needle swung; the announcer spoke on . . . gusts of a hundred . . . rainfall twenty inches or more . . . acute flood danger, all low-lying areas, coastal and inland. *Twenty inches,* he thought. *Or thirty. What could that do to Tannahac Lake, the reservoir. . . .*

The power failed about one; and now it was four, and the wind still grew. You wouldn't believe that the wind could still be growing, but it was. It thundered and screamed and bashed the house.

Simon read a bit in braille, but his fingers were stupid with the noise. "Why not practise on your buzzer, Simon?"

It was a battery-buzzer. *What'll I send?* he thought, and he did an alphabet. And then he sent: "S-I-M-O-N H-A-L-L" about ten times; he could not think of anything else to send.

"What are you sending, darling?"

"Oh, nothing," he said. He stopped.

Mum read to Jennifer and the wind was loud. The wind, the thunder and the rain made one huge sound together. She read a story called *The Little Engine That Could,* a small kid's story, but Simon listened; and then there was a crashing smashing of broken glass, and wind and rain in the living-room.

He held his handkerchief to his cheek. Mum tried to nail a board across the window where a pane was broken, but it wouldn't stay, and the

wind and rain came blasting in. "What a carpenter," she said. "Let's get out of the wind."

So they sat on the cellar stairs, and the storm was above them, and Mum said: "What happened to your face?"

"Cut," he said.

She went away and came back, and he felt the warm beam on his cheek. "It isn't deep," she said. She put on ointment and an adhesive plaster. She shook the torch. "Battery's almost done," she said. "How typical of Mrs. Hall."

"The cellar's all water everywhere," said Jennifer.

He heard water pouring in along the walls. "How deep?" she asked. He shivered in the darkness.

"The shoeshine table's floating," Jennifer said. "That's how deep."

"Jim said . . ." he began. His mouth was all dry. He tried to remember what Jim had said, but he had not been listening properly to Jim. "Jim said to say: 'If there's a helluva Noah's ark of rain, come over quick. Tannahac Lake might bust her britches.'"

"Jim Kent said that? Why didn't you tell me?"

He forgot. He did not know. He didn't know anything.

"Wait!" Mum said. She left the door open. This time the sound was not a clatter of glass and a roar of wind. This time the sound was a great huge hammer bashing a hole in the house, and Jennifer was crying. She held on to his legs, but he did not hold her. She was a step below him. Jennifer stopped crying.

MUM came back. "We couldn't," she said. "Not possibly."

"Water's nearly at my toes," said Jennifer.

"Upstairs we go."

Simon did not move. He couldn't go up to that again.

Mum shook his shoulder. She shook him hard. "Come on!" she said. He came. "Your room," she said. "It's away from the wind." She followed with Jennifer, and pushed and prodded him from behind, and he climbed the stairs, and the noise was ten times as loud up here. He sat on his bed. Mum sat between him and Jennifer. Her arm was round him; he felt a bit better. "What was that huge crash, Mum?"

"A branch of some old tree," she said. "It came through the wall. Poor living-room."

"What time is it, Mum?"

"Ten after eight," she said. "Extra late-supper dividend. Ham sandwich and a banana. Here!"

"I can't see to eat," said Jennifer. "It's pitch black dark and it's past my bedtime."

Then the biggest gust, bigger than anything there had ever been, seized on the house, and Simon felt the house heave up and hang and settle back, and he clutched at the metal of his bed. "Sandwich," Mum said.

He shook his head. He wished Dad were here. *If only Dad were here.*

"Eat it," she said. He tried to eat the bread and ham, but he had no spit to chew it with.

"Please, couldn't we have a light?" asked Jennifer.

"Our last candle—oh, we might as well."

"That's lovely," said Jennifer when Mum came back, and Simon managed a half banana, and Mum said: "Shall we sing that hymn?" She did not say which one, but she began to sing a hymn they knew, and Jennifer joined in, and the three of them sang it:

"Jesus bids us shine
With a pure, clear light,
Like a little candle
Burning in the night.
In this world of darkness,
So let us shine—
You in your small corner,
And I in mine."

"Listen!" Mum said. "The wind is dropping."

Simon listened. In all these hours, in all the time he ever could remember, there had been the wind, the thunder and the rain, the giants storming at him. But now the wind had dropped. Just for one moment there was no wind at all, and then it blew, again, hard, hard, hard as ever, the horrible wind. The wind wasn't dropping. . . . Or was it now?

"It really is," Mum said. "I wonder, though? What do they say about hurri——?"

"Sssh, Mum!" He opened the window, and it blew again, and Simon waited, and then he heard what he thought he had heard the time before: a car horn sounding. It did not sound in one single blast, or "toot-toot" like any old horn. This horn spelled out: "S-I-M-O-N."

"Simon," he said. "That must be Dad." But the small horn sound was swallowed by the wind.

"How do you know? How could it be Dad?"

"Everyone's different," he said. "Like writing." Clipped dots, long long dashes—Dad's trademark on the buzzer. "It's Dad, for sure."

Now again: "S-I-M-O-N." Pause. "C-O-M-E." Pause. "F-L-O-O-D-S." "Come, floods," said Simon.

Why didn't HE come, though? COME FLOODS. But it's pitch dark, and the torch dies out each time in half a minute . . . how can I take you? How can I, possibly?

He fought himself. "Wind's stopping," he said. "We can try. Come on, Mum!"

Now Simon was less afraid. He went downstairs, and Mum and Jennifer came after him, and he thought: *Trees blown down. I'll take my stick.* He found his stick in the porch, and they went outside, and the wind was blowing. He edged along the house, and came to the corner, and put his stick out beyond the corner. The wind whipped the stick right across in his hand—that was how strong the wind was. But suddenly there was no wind again. He heard it go roaring away through trees, and the only sound was rain.

Water up to his ankles; then a higher place, the crown of the road? "Mum," he said. "What's the torch like?"

"Okay for a few seconds now and then."

"Gosh, it's dark." Jennifer's voice was high and small and afraid in the night.

"I'll go first," he said. "Don't use the light yet, Mum." Then Mum held on to his shoulder, and she carried Jennifer, who cried a bit.

Simon walked. He held the stick in front. He stumbled, but Mum steadied him. . . . *Twenty-three,* he counted. Here the curve began. He followed it with his toes, left a little, left; and while he counted, the tune was sounding in his head: *Jesus bids us shine. . . . Thirty-eight, thirty-nine. . . . With a pure, clear light. . . .*

Now the other way, and now the wind came blasting from the sea, and the three of them lay together on the road, and trees were crashing, and that gust of wind was gone, and Simon made himself get up again. The horn was sounding now again, a desperate flicker of sound far ahead: "S-I-M-O-N."

He went on. The stick struck. . . . He put out his other hand and felt spruce branches, prickly. "Light, Mum," he said.

It was not too big a tree. She put Jennifer over, and climbed over, and helped him over, and he led the way again. . . . *Sixty-three, sixty-four. . . . Like a little candle, Burning in the night.* Now straight ahead, and halfway to the bridge, and Simon heard the river rushing, the Tannahac, the quiet stream where Dad once taught him to fish for trout.

In this world of darkness,

"What's happened to him . . . ?" Mum's hand gripped hard on Simon's shoulder.

"Mum!" he said.

"Yes, Simon?"

"I know about being blind," he said.

"I was thinking of it," his mother said. "Our eyes in the eye of the storm—is that being blind?"

"I see a star," said Jennifer. "Just one star straight above, and not another single speckle anywhere."

A second tree. They managed that. Simon was tired. . . . *Hundred and twenty-seven . . . twenty-eight. So let us shine.*

"Wait, darling!" she said. "It's over the bridge."

The bridge shuddered and trembled in the flood.

Far away upstream, a new sound had begun—the rumble-grumble of a great sound far away, quite like the sound of a big jet rolling over the sky.

"S-I-M-O-N."

"Hold on to me tight," Mum said. They waded through the foot-plucking flood, the handrail drumming.

Simon led again. But the climb was steep, and he was tired, and he was stumbling.

"Quick, darling! Quick!"

THE rumbling grew up-river. It was changing, swelling, filling the valley. The tune still went through Simon's head. He hummed it aloud, saying the words to himself . . . *You in your small corner, And I in mine.*

"Robert!" Mum called. "Robert!"

"Mary! Have you got the kids?"

"We're all here. Are you hurt?"

A grunt not far ahead. Mum dropped Jennifer, and ran. Jennifer hung on to Simon and they went together.

"Of course I'm not dead. Can't you hear me, dammit?" He sounded cross.

"What happened, darling?"

"Damned pine came down smack on the hood of the car. I'm pinned in here, and one leg's cracked, I guess. God knows why the horn still works. You heard it, did you?"

"Simon heard it. He read the message when the wind was dropping; so we came."

"With *that* apology for a light? How the . . . how?"

"Simon led us."

The noise in the valley grew, and Dad said: "Simon Hall," perhaps to himself.

"Here, Dad," Simon said.

"Good man," his father said.

They listened. The flood roared over flat land above Tannahac Point, beside the river.

"Goodbye, dear house," said Mum. Then they were quiet, hearing the flood and thinking of the house.

"You absolutely stuck, Dad?"

"Sure I'm stuck."

"Jim said he'd be late; but I could leave a message with Mrs. Kent."

"No," said Mum. "Not you."

"Here comes the wind again," said Robert Hall. "Get in back, you three."

"But Robert, your leg!"

"It's pinned," he said. "I'll live. Get in."

They sat in the car. The eye of the hurricane had passed. A great wind blew now from the west, and Simon did not fear the wind. *Old Jim will come,* thought Simon Hall; and he fell asleep.

In this world of darkness,
So let us shine—
You in your small corner,
And I in mine.

THE END

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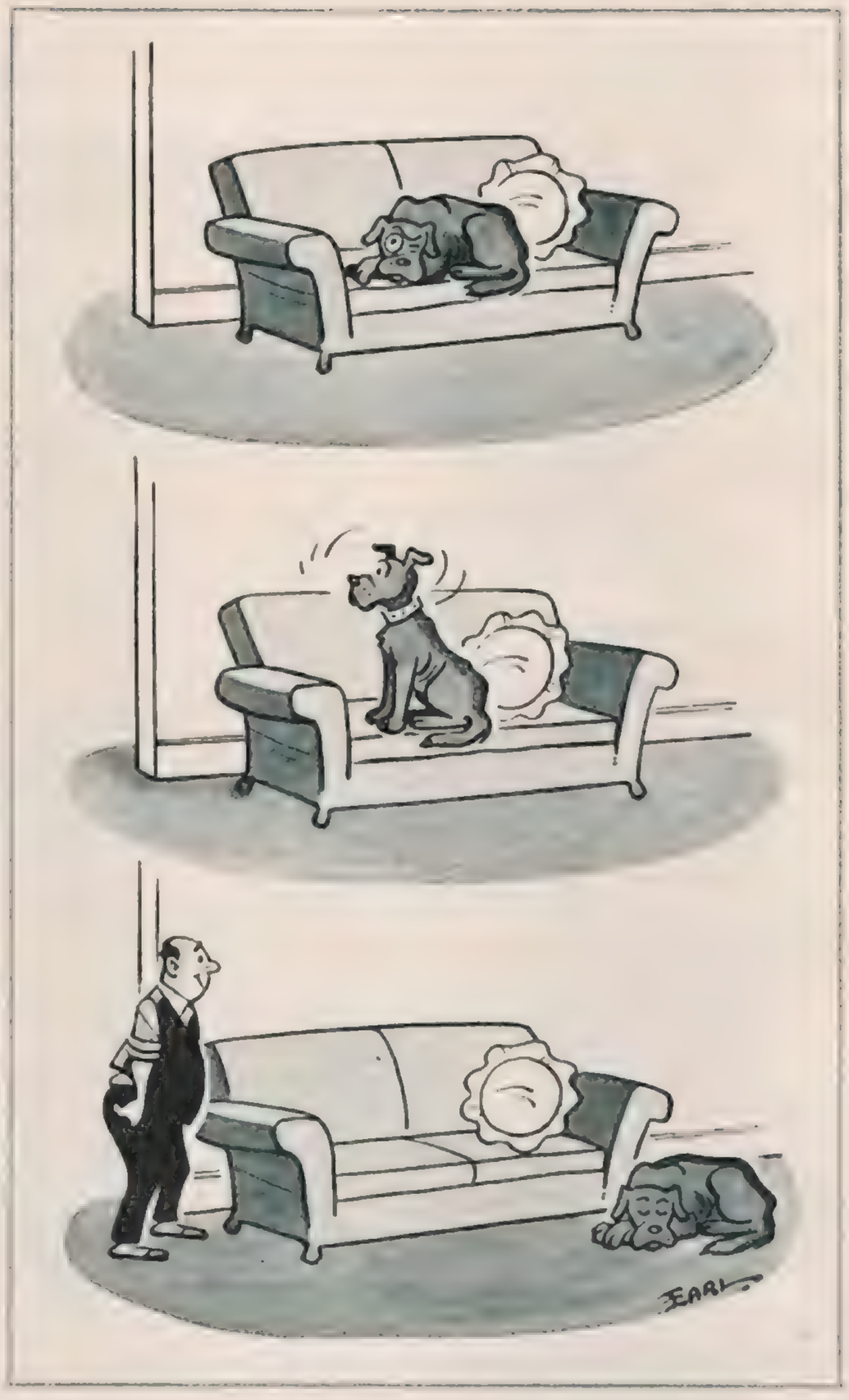

VOICES—I

How pleasant it is to hear a woman talk in that low key which always characterizes the true lady. In the sanctuary of the home how such a voice soothes the fretful child and cheers the weary husband!

Charles Lamb

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Buying horses is racing's biggest gamble. You can spend a fortune on a thoroughbred that never gets its nose in front—or find a certainty for a song

Winners from the bargain basement

by ALAN LLOYD

THE mare Campanelle had been at stud for the last four of its nine years without producing a foal. Nobody at Newmarket's December sales envied Ian Radclyffe, a solicitor, his buy—not even at £75.

Radclyffe had no dreams of leading in a winner. He wanted the horse for his wife to ride. But Campanelle's good French breeding prompted him to ask Marius (Scotty) Pringle, a Newmarket trainer, if it was worth giving the mare a race. "She was old, but I reckoned that her period at stud had been a four-year holiday," says Pringle. "I said yes, it was worth a try."

When the flat season started, Campanelle won at a canter over a mile at Newmarket from Llanstephan, a horse which had cost £2,500. The tote paid sixty-one-and-a-half to one.

"It's a mistake to think that only expensive animals win races," says Pringle, a tough ex-jockey of fifty-one who has been riding and training bargain horses since he was eighteen. "Cost is a poor indication of a racehorse's potential."

Sir Victor Sassoon's colt Hard Ridden, which won the Derby this year, was bought in Dublin for 270 guineas.

Of some four thousand horses which will have competed in about two thousand races before the season is over, a large number cost less than a mass-produced family car. Some will have cost no more than a television set, but many will be among the year's winners.

Farmer's Wife, one of the best "platers" to run this season, was bought originally for £100. The horse won at Alexandra Park and Warwick, and was bought-in recently for almost £1,000 by the three farmers who jointly own it.

Liberal Lady, possibly the fastest two-year-old on the Turf last year, was sold as a yearling at Newmarket for £800—a modest sum for a horse that could be a champion.

Small owners get the biggest surprises. On August 28 last year, Mrs. Faith Grant, a farmer's wife from Alnwick, Northumberland, won the Oxclose Stakes at Catterick with Border Toast, the first horse she had ever owned. Toastie, as Mrs. Grant affectionately called her horse, was born and bred on the farm. It started at 33-1 after finishing last in the only two other races that it ran.

All that the Grants had on Toastie at Catterick was £1 for a place. They had warned their friends not to back the horse.

Another small owner, Mrs. Muriel Wilson of Yorkshire, bought her racing hope, Nick of Time, in Dublin for less than £200 and had it shipped to England. Badly drawn, and an outsider, Nick of Time won its first race as a two-year-old at Thirsk. The same season it won two more races on the flat.

Mrs. Wilson refused to sell the horse. "Nick of Time means more to her than money," says a friend.

Between October, 1956, and February, 1957, a little grey called Sailor's Return led the field past the winning post seven times; once at Ascot. Sailor's Return, owned by Leslie Dowling, a Birmingham business man, once changed hands

Continued on page 30

Newmarket trainer Marius Pringle (centre) adjusts the saddle of Dentiview, mount for Shaun Beary. Pringle can turn cheap horses into champions

Would

A JURY can sometimes be too clever. On one occasion a man was charged with the murder, in London, of a woman whose engine-driver husband was at the time in the north of England. The defence was an alibi, but the evidence of identity was clear. The jury were out two hours and then they returned to ask for "further direction."

It seemed that for most of the two hours they had been considering the possible guilt of the absent husband, just because he had not been called as a witness. When the judge reminded them of the issue, the proof of the guilt of the man accused, they quickly found it sufficient and returned their verdict.

Such lapses are comparatively rare. More often lawyers are amazed at the precision of a jury's verdict—how they will find a man guilty on some counts in the indictment and not guilty on others, although no such distinction has been suggested to them, and how distinctions made between two prisoners are afterwards agreed by counsel to have been thoroughly just. On those few occasions when the reasons for the verdict are discovered it may be found that it was most curious reasoning. No matter; it was right on the merits of the case, though not necessarily right in the strict interpretation of the law.

If, as recently in the case of Dr. Adams, of Eastbourne, it is thought that jurors drawn from a locality may be influenced by that flow of inaccurate rumour known as "local knowledge," the trial is removed far away, perhaps to the Old Bailey. Even then, as all evidence given at the magistrates' court is published, some of the jury may "know" facts which at the trial are held, after argument in their absence, to be inadmissible evidence. Hence the suggestion that such evidence be more often taken down in closed court. But although much is done, and more may be done, to keep the jury in blinkers, they can usually be trusted to concentrate their attention on the evidence before them at the trial and to ignore all else.

Sir Patrick Devlin once described the average jury as "predominantly male, middle-aged, middle-minded and middle class" and he was probably right. A juryman or woman must be

you trust your life to a jury?

by CHRISTMAS HUMPHREYS

Guilty or not guilty? . . . An authoritative opinion on the system that puts alarming power into the hands of twelve untrained citizens

a property owner or householder between twenty-one and sixty. Exemptions include peers, Members of Parliament, doctors, lawyers, councillors, clergymen, police and Post Office workers, and members of the armed forces. This cuts out a large section of the professional classes, and the property qualification eliminates many of the working class. And property owners are seldom young and include far more men than women.

But there are generally two or three women on a jury and very occasionally there is an actual majority of women. It is said that women are apt to be hard on women, especially good-looking ones, and they are sometimes challenged by the defence, and removed from the jury, on the strength of that belief. Prejudice certainly ran high against them when they were first called to serve on juries, and my father, Sir Travers Humphreys, told a story of the horror of his clerk at Chichester, where he was then Recorder, at their inclusion on his jury panel.

The Recorder was all ready to welcome the first ladies to appear, but session after session went by with an all-male jury. Finally he inquired of the clerk as to their absence. "What, sir?" answered the worthy old gentleman. "Women on one of my juries? I've never heard such nonsense. I just take their names out as soon as they appear."

There are those who are still rude about women's fitness to serve. But in domestic matters they excel, and they may be better judges of a woman's veracity than any male.

Once the names of twelve persons are drawn from the box on the clerk's table, those twelve will, unless challenged, try the case before them, and the speed with which juries are empanelled in this country is the envy of all Americans. In England no personal question may be asked of any juryman, such as his religion or his views on capital punishment.

For long hours the jurors concentrate on their task, trying to understand the evidence, the submissions of counsel, the arguments against and for the accused, and the judge's advice to them on the law and the evidence. They may ask questions, and curious many of them are. Sometimes it is a member who wishes to show off his special knowledge; sometimes a desire to be given facts which our complicated law of evidence thinks it unfair to give.

When the jury retire human nature asserts itself. The public never learns how the foreman is chosen, and it is always interesting to see when the verdict is given which of the twelve emerged as the "strong man" who guided the rest to their decision. For none may help them. Once they have retired, under the eye of a jury bailiff who locks them in, they are as sealed off from the rest of their fellows as though in a fever hospital suffering from some highly contagious disease. None may unlock that door without leave of the judge, unless the foreman rings to announce that they are agreed upon their verdict or want to ask some question.

The face of a certain assize judge, therefore, may be imagined when in the county town of a very small county he was told that the police officer in charge of the case had retired with the jury, as was the local custom, to remind them of any facts about which they might like their memories refreshed.

Until 1940 a murder jury were not allowed to separate between the end of the summing-up and the giving of their verdict. In a long trial this might mean that they were sealed off from their families and their business affairs for days on end. But in the war the rule was broken, and in only one case was it believed that the freedom was abused. Indeed, the trust reposed in juries is a matter of amazement to foreigners, and a matter of surprise even to ourselves.

There were wartime trials in which evidence had to be given of such a secret nature that even high-ranking members of the government were unaware of it, yet these secrets were freely revealed to a jury of twelve men and women (later this was reduced to seven for a while) in the course of a trial of someone for betraying these secrets to the enemy. And these juries, too, went home at night, trusted to keep those vital secrets for the rest of their lives.

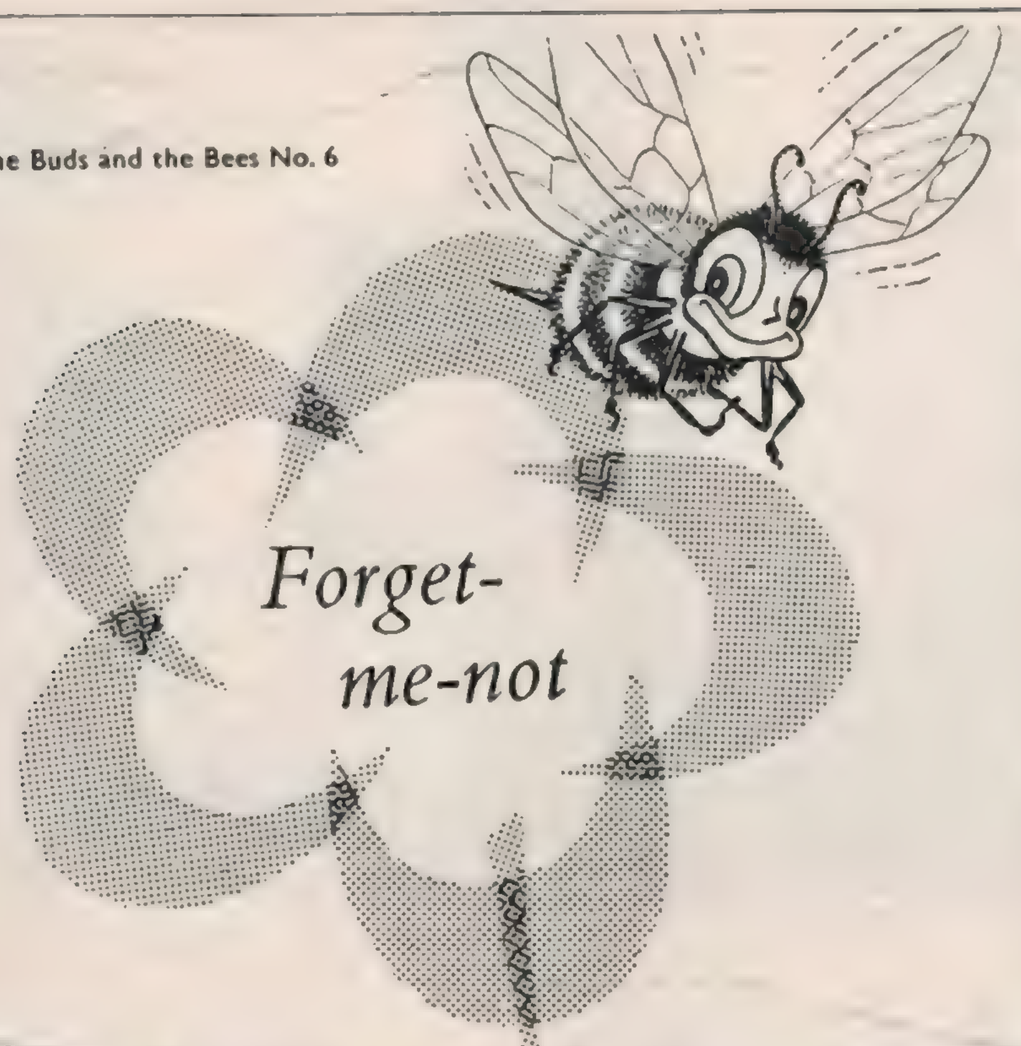
Perhaps the outstanding feature of the English jury system is that the verdict must still be unanimous, which means that all twelve must agree on the prisoner's guilt or innocence.

A chairman of County Justices was horrified at quarter sessions in Kent some years ago to have the foreman of a jury answer the clerk's first question, "Are you agreed upon your verdict?" with the observation, "Yes, we are—nine-three for guilty." The chairman is still wondering how many men he has sentenced on such an illegal majority verdict, and is nowadays most careful to have the final question put, "And is that the verdict of you *all?*"

Sometimes the verdict is expressed too soon. Not long ago a jury returned to court after a long absence and when asked if they were agreed on their verdict the foreman replied that they were. "No, we aren't," said a woman in the back row with a flushed face and foreign accent.

The other jurors turned on her and repeated what were obviously well-worn arguments. "Oh, very well," said the woman sulkily, and the

The Buds and the Bees No. 6



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chairman satisfied himself that the verdict was then genuinely unanimous.

The need for unanimity is perhaps the part of the jury system most in dispute, and the present Lord Chief Justice has more than once doubted if it should be retained. To allow juries to reach a verdict by simple majority—as is done in Scotland—might avoid the expense and distress of a retrial after a failure to agree caused by one or two cranks.

But the nuisance caused by a retrial can be exaggerated, as the number of retrials every year is only a very small proportion of the total of cases tried by jury.

A dissenting minority in a jury might suggest reasonable doubt and undermine public confidence in the verdict.

An alternative suggestion has been made to reduce the jury from twelve persons to seven, as was tried out during the last war with apparent success. This is a powerful suggestion. But some judges have expressed dislike of the smaller number, especially in country districts, where they think that one strong mind may persuade the remaining six into a decision on which no twelve men and women would ever agree.

It is true, if a trifle frivolous to record it, that there was once a jury of thirteen. A learned judge was continuing his summing-up after the mid-day adjournment. Suddenly he

VOICES—2

There is no index to character so sure as the voice.

Benjamin Disraeli

stopped, looked puzzled, and began with a pointing finger to count. All followed the finger with their eyes, and all came to the same astounding conclusion. There *were* thirteen in the jury box.

Some member of the public, strolling into court and finding it full, had firmly remarked, "Move up a bit if you can," to the end man in the jury box, and had there made himself comfortable. He was removed.

The phrase, "trial by jury," is, of course, not quite true. The trial is by judge and jury, and while the jury find the facts and give the verdict, the judge must tell them the law.

Moreover, the judge himself decides quite a number of facts. One of them is whether or not, at the close of the case for the prosecution, there is sufficient evidence to go to the jury. A jury is not trained to draw reasonable inferences, nor, indeed, to weigh contradicting items of evidence against one another, and a case may look black which is no more than one of suspicion.

In the same way a judge must decide whether a statement made by the accused was made freely and without pressure; if he holds to the contrary the jury will never know its contents. And even when a verdict of guilty is given the judge can refuse to accept it if it seems to him contradictory in itself.

No census has ever been taken to decide which of the various factors in the trial most assists the jury in reaching their verdict, nor could one be taken.

It would certainly seem that nowadays it is the evidence and the demeanour of the witness which comes first, and the judge's address to the jury a good second. Counsel's speeches, which day by day grow less dramatic and more sweetly reasonable, come, it is suggested, a poor third. These dozen citizens will never be dominated by the exact words of the law, and in the privacy of their room may agree to acquit a man where lawyers would feel bound to convict.

If they feel that in all the circumstances the accused, though probably guilty, has been already punished enough, or only did what he did through dire provocation, or that the police were unduly harsh in their behaviour, or that the person aggrieved got only what he deserved, in all these cases and a dozen more they may well agree to say, "Not guilty," and that is the end of the case.

True, they may themselves import their politics, or in the name of compassion be foolishly sentimental. And they may spend hours in their room debating some issue which is entirely irrelevant. But with twelve persons the foibles and peculiarities of one are likely to be balanced by the views of the others. Equally the jury may express by their verdict disgust at undue delay in prosecuting, or their dislike at the technicality of the offence, matters which a lawyer would have to disregard in convicting, though he could take them into account in the sentence, if any, imposed.

The only alternative to the jury system would, presumably, be to have three judges instead of one—with three times the expense. They would have to be unanimous, and there might be at least as many disagreements as now, with three different judges to replace the others at the second trial. Each judge would feel himself bound by his own interpretation of the law, and would have to convict whenever he found that the law, as he viewed it, had been disobeyed.

It is true that the Court of Criminal Appeal is composed of three judges, but it finds no facts, it merely revises points of law and reconsiders sentence.

Moreover, judges are human beings. After years on the Bench they may become known for their personal attitude to certain of the legal-human problems which they have to solve day by day, such as the behaviour of car-owners, or insurance companies or the use of accomplices as witnesses for the prosecution. Lawyers, when told that they will be before the Court of Criminal Appeal on a certain day, may ask, "Who is sitting?" and decide their tactics accordingly. But whereas strong views held and expressed by three men may affect the scales of justice, the likes and dislikes of any twelve men and women on any subject will largely cancel out. THE END

"She must be coming back from holiday"

SKELETON COAST • 2

Rescue comes—and goes

by JOHN MARSH and LYMAN ANSON

It was from the south that the sound came, faintly at first, then louder. The sixty-three castaways on the beach—men, women and children, three of them young mothers with babies in their arms—staggered to their feet. It was a heartening, hopeful sound that none of them had heard since leaving England—the roar of a plane.

For a moment they could see nothing but the bleak, sandy skyline of Skeleton Coast, an arid, five hundred-mile stretch of beach that is the loneliest in south-west Africa.

Then they saw it, a twin-engined Ventura bomber, coming in low over the dunes, approaching fast. As the pilot flew over, the castaways scattered, anxious to discover what he was going to drop.

Since the running aground of their ship, the 13,000-ton Dunedin Star, three days previously on November 30, 1942, the castaways' plight had been getting more and more desperate.

Although tents were improvised out of sails propped up by oars, the sun scorched legs, particularly the women's below skirt-level, making them raw and blistered. The hot, wind-blown sand worked itself into the babies' eyes, causing pain and preventing sleep.

Worse still was the hunger and terrible thirst.

Ships arrived, but the tremendous surf that pounded the beach formed a barrier between them and the castaways, and these rescue attempts ended in increased despair. A Norwegian ship managed to get to the wreck of the Dunedin Star, six hundred yards from the shore, take off the captain and forty-two men who remained on it and transfer them to a British freighter named the Manchester Division. Then, to the castaways' disappointment, the Norwegians sailed away. The Sir Charles Elliott, a tug from Walvis Bay, a base several hundred miles to the south, also left soon after arrival because she was short of fuel.

The Nerine, a minesweeper, was still anchored offshore with the Manchester Division, and that afternoon tried to float rafts loaded with food and water to the castaways. But the powerful Benguella Current that sweeps Skeleton Coast merely carried away the rafts and their precious cargoes northwards, tantalizingly out of reach.

The only information the Manchester Division had for the ragged, unshaven group on the beach was that a convoy of police lorries, due to come six or seven hundred miles overland from Windhoek in the interior, was delayed and would not arrive for at least another five days.

After so many heartbreaking setbacks, the castaways gazed upwards with hope renewed as the bomber circled and came in again for another run.

It dropped inner tubes filled with water.

Although the tubes fell on soft sand, they burst on

ILLUSTRATION BY SEABRIGHT

The castaways had watched ships arrive—and turn away. Now, with raging thirsts, they were seeing precious water gush into the sand . . .

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impact. Horrified, the castaways saw the water spurt out and disappear instantly.

Again the plane approached, and once more the castaways watched with mounting anxiety. This time they saw four ten-gallon water containers with parachutes fall from the bomb bay.

The castaways cheered, and some of them wept with relief, as the containers hit the ground without breaking.

In six runs, the plane unloaded water, condensed milk, dried and tinned fruit, bread, coffee, sugar, tinned vegetables, bully beef and medical supplies.

Then it flew off inland, dropping lower. Suddenly it vanished behind a rise.

Chief Officer John Davies, who was in charge of the castaways, turned grimly to one of the passengers, Commander Brian Hewitt, a six-foot-two Australian of the Royal Navy. "I think it's down, Commander. You'd better head a search party."

Hewitt and four seamen set off, trudging through the ankle-deep sand that squeaked with a human-like groan at every step. Their departure was watched so intently that nobody noticed Davies get a heliographed message from the Manchester Division.

"Am ordered to proceed to Cape Town with rescued men. Minesweeper will stand by you."

A tense hour passed, then two of the seamen returned, breathless with excitement. One of them called to Davies: "Get the women ready, sir. The plane came down on purpose. The pilot, Captain Naude, wants to fly the women and children out before dark. They'll have to hurry. It's a good two miles."

At once a happy procession moved off through the dunes. The three mothers insisted on carrying their babies, but Davies saw to it that they were accompanied by seamen. Two more seamen walked on either side of Mrs. Lydia Saad-Moussa, an Egyptian passenger's wife, who was pregnant.

They had gone only a few hundred yards, however, when another seaman appeared, arms waving, and brought the group to a halt. A conference followed. Then the women faced about. Slowly, disconsolately, they walked back to camp.

"The plane has stuck in the sand and can't get off again," they explained to Davies.

Five volunteers left camp to help dig the bomber free, but with no success. It was dark when Hewitt and the men returned, bringing the news of a fresh catastrophe; Naude had seen the Sir Charles Elliott shipwrecked about eighty miles down the coast, having run aground on her return trip to Walvis Bay.

By this time, the departure of the Manchester Division had been noticed by the castaways, and the evening meal was a gloomy and silent one.

The castaways were settling down for yet another uncomfortable night when it was realized that Jones, the steward's boy, was missing. There was cause for alarm. The boy had been suffering from hallucinations. Cannibals, he said, were all around the camp. When he added lions to his list of discoveries, insisting that he had seen them prowling among the dunes, his companions began to wonder. Only the day before a party searching for driftwood had come across mysterious spoors a quarter of a mile away.

Davies, Hewitt, with the Dunedin Star's doctor, Burn Wood, and a dozen others, made themselves wooden torches at the camp fire and fanned out into the desert. Flickering shadows danced among the dunes.

"Jones! Jones!"

There was no answer.

Keeping well apart, the men turned inland. Suddenly Hewitt's torch revealed a figure seated on a small hillock of sand.

"Jones?" called Hewitt.

"Sh-h-h! Keep away from the cannibals," Jones warned in a loud whisper. "I got lost. We're *all* lost."

Dr. Wood came up. "Nobody's lost," he said. "See our camp fire over there?"

The question struck terror. "That's the cannibals' fire!" Jones shrieked. "Let me go!" He kicked at Dr. Wood. Before he could lash out again, several men grabbed him.

They had to half-carry, half-drag the boy back to camp, where the doctor quietened him with an injection of hyoscine and two grains of luminal.

Early the next morning, while Dr. Wood held "sick parade"—paying special attention to Sidney Palmer, one of the babies, whose sight had been threatened by the grains of sand getting into his eyes—Hewitt and four new volunteers began another two-mile journey across the dunes to help to free the plane.

When they returned in the late afternoon, they were accompanied by Naude and his crew of three. All nine were hot, dirty, exhausted and—from their expressions — thoroughly discouraged. The plane was still stuck.

Naude stood out among the airmen as the tallest and thinnest. He introduced his crew. "Lieutenant Paddy Nicolay, my co-pilot; Johann Doms, our observer, and Sergeant Chapman, our radio operator."

Dr. Wood took Naude down to the water's edge, where Hewitt and a small crowd of castaways sat on the sand, staring seaward. The Nerine was making another attempt to float supplies ashore. As before, the rafts were carried past the camp by the current.

The Nerine then signalled: *"Shortage of fuel and supplies forces us to return to Walvis Bay. More help coming soon. Cheer up."*

This cast a deeper cloud over the

"Are you sure you gave out the invitations?"

castaways. The mood of despair that accompanied the Nerine's departure was relieved only when Naude said quietly: "Mr. Davies, some of your men can still walk, can't they?"

"A little, if they have to. Why?"

"My crew and I are in fair shape. Let's get three or four of your best people together and follow the rafts northwards."

Shortly after midday, the search party set out along the shore—Davies, Hewitt, an eighteen-year-old senior cadet named Jimmy Thompson, a deckhand and the four airmen.

The deckhand was so weak that after a short distance he collapsed. The others sat him at the water's edge, removed what remained of his shoes and told him to keep splashing his bare feet in the water until he felt better; then go back to camp.

The searchers had greater luck than they dared to hope. After about four miles they came across the Nerine's rafts, swept up on the beach.

ON the biggest raft was a forty-four gallon drum of fresh water. Transporting it back to camp was physically impossible, so Naude brought out his pocket knife. Pounded with a stone, its large blade penetrated the top of the drum. Thompson, searching the beach, found a large shell to serve as a cup.

The seven of them tipped the drum and took turns at drinking. They gulped the tepid liquid. They threw their heads back and let it run slowly down their parched throats. They gargled with it, savouring its glorious, life-giving wetness.

Aboard the smaller rafts were boxes of biscuits, bully beef and five-gallon cans of water. Carrying all this back to camp was exhausting work, and when the men arrived there it was dark. They slumped on the sand and were quickly asleep.

Next morning, after their breakfast of tea and bully beef, Naude and his fellow-airmen went over to Davies.

"We've decided to go back to the plane for a night or two," they told him.

They pointed out that they had enough food and water in the plane to last them for a while, and this would save them from using the camp's stores, which were getting very low.

Later that day, after the airmen had left, another Ventura bomber arrived, swooped overhead and sent the survivors scattering as it disgorged food packages and blankets, some of which unrolled in the air and came down like grotesque, flapping birds. These were followed by a tightly-rolled bell tent, complete with its centre pole in three sections.

"Wonderful!" cried the castaways.

The pilot circled around and came towards them again. They saw then that he had saved his greatest contribution for the last—a twenty-gallon metal container of water.

As it was pushed through the bomb bay, everyone waited for its parachute to open.

When it failed to do this, the castaways gasped. To their horror, they saw the great object plunge and hit the ground with a thud.

Running, hobbling and stumbling, the castaways converged on the spot. The impact had split the container open and most of the water had been lost. One small corner, however, remained intact, forming a pocket holding perhaps a pint. This was scooped up anxiously by cupped hands.

Davies burst out angrily: "The parachute was too small even if it *had* opened."

Said Hewitt: "Naude told me that there isn't a big parachute in Walvis Bay. . . ."

Sunday morning began with a woman's shrill cry: "A ship! Coming up from the south!"

The new arrival, anchoring well offshore, identified herself as the Natalia, a minesweeper sent to take the Nerine's place. Since her radio was good for only two hundred miles, her skipper reported that he had brought two dozen carrier-pigeons for communicating the castaways' most immediate needs to Walvis Bay. The message

"One person from the audience . . ."

added: "*First time pigeons ever used in rescue work on South African coast.*"

The castaways' cook muttered: "They'd be worth more boiled."

After launching a raft—which promptly drifted out of sight northwards—and then making a fruitless search along the coast for a quiet spot where a landing could be made through the surf, the Natalia reappeared and anchored off the wreck of the Dunedin Star. Her return was a mystery until her next message was translated.

She had sprung a boiler leak.

The castaways were then aroused by the approach of the same plane that had flown over them the day before.

"Look out!" yelled Johnston and Davies together.

Down tumbled food packages, scattering over a wide area. Every water-filled inner tube that followed hit the ground and burst. It was maddening for the castaways to follow with their eyes where each wriggling tube fell, make their way painfully to the spot and find nothing but a curled-up strip of rubber and some damp sand.

Had the losses taken place a few days earlier they would have provoked tears, curses and shouts of rage. Now they brought only a few bitter laughs. The castaways were too depressed even to take an interest in a weighted note dropped by the plane.

The pilot had scrawled: "*No trace of police convoy. Must be lost.*"

"Hand me my binoculars, Thompson," said Davies. "I think the minesweeper wants to signal us."

As he read the message, his expression changed from interest to surprise, and then to anger. "Oh, *no*! She's leaving us too. Finds she can't fix the boilers at sea and is going home. She has only four tons of fresh water left. Think of it! Four tons!"

"She's asking," Thompson broke in, "if there's anything special we need immediately that could be sent by plane."

"Tell him water."

"And more shelter," came Dr. Wood's voice.

The young man hurried to the water's edge to make his semaphoring as unmistakable as possible. Three of the passengers, Mrs. Dorcas Whitworth, seventeen-year-old Annabel Taylor and her mother, Alice, followed him. As the Natalia gave a farewell blast of her whistle and pointed her bow down the coast, Mrs. Whitworth touched Thompson on the arm and the three women began pleading with him.

Davies, near the camp, then saw Thompson suddenly start waving his arms as if trying to catch the Natalia's attention in a matter of life or death.

"*We see you,*" a signalman on the vessel's bridge spelled out. "*What's wrong?*"

Davies, a hard-bitten seaman, gasped aloud as he translated the postscript that Thompson had been argued into signalling to the homebound vessel.

"*Send face cream. . . .*"

Next day, the return of Naude and his men, dragging their plane's inflatable rubber dinghy in the hope that the surf would die down sufficiently to use it, was followed by the arrival of two Venturas.

"Look what's happening!" yelled Hewitt.

A twenty-gallon water container was dropping through the air. Then suddenly a big parachute billowed out above it. More containers with parachutes followed—four from each plane.

The castaways had never seen anything more thrilling. They stumbled to where each container had landed. There came a moment of agonized suspense, then a cry of relief.

"It didn't break!"

"Neither did this one!"

"Nor this!"

Proper-size parachutes, hastily flown in from Cape Town and Pretoria, had done their work.

Their cloth was invaluable. At the women's suggestion—and with their help—two tents were rigged up for their own use. Some of the remaining fabric became much-needed covering to protect the women and children from the bone-racking chill of night; the rest was torn into squares to make nappies for the babies.

Late in the evening of that day, one of the men came across a small, carefully wrapped package which had dropped behind a dune and been overlooked.

He hurried with it to Davies, whose eyebrows rose.

"Doctor," he called to Wood. "Here's some new medicine for your female patients."

So it was Wood who announced to Mrs. Whitworth and the Taylors: "Ladies, your face cream has arrived. . . ."

The little minesweeper Nerine returned and anchored south-west of the wreck of the Dunedin Star, as near to the shore as her captain dared to come. In addition to her lifeboat, she had a flat-bottomed surfboat — a familiar type of craft around South African shores, some fifteen feet long.

The Nerine's men boarded their lifeboat and towed the surfboat to the wreck of the liner. There they launched one of the ship's big lifeboats which, with the surfboat in tow, they anchored about 150 yards from the beach.

Their plan was to run a rope from the lifeboat to the beach and, once it was firmly fixed, pull the little surfboat along it.

"But how can they get the other end of the rope to us, Mr. Davies?" asked Mrs. Whitworth.

Repeated attempts to get a line-carrying rocket to the beach failed when the rockets fell short. Then Davies exclaimed: "Look—one of the men is trying to swim ashore."

The castaways sprang to their feet, their eyes on a black speck of a head being tossed in the outer surf. They saw the swimmer bowled over and over like a circus acrobat as he tried to battle across the current.

About two-thirds of the way across, the head vanished.

Thirty seconds passed.

"Has he gone?" gasped Davies.

Fifteen more seconds.

"He's swimming again!" yelled Hewitt. Hastily organizing a human chain, the commander led the way as far out into the surf as he could keep his feet.

The swimmer was only a boy of perhaps sixteen: a boy with red hair and terrified eyes. Hewitt grabbed him by his hair and one arm. A light line was seen to be tied round his waist when he was dragged up on the beach and lay on the sand, chest heaving. He wore a T-shirt but no trousers.

Suddenly he shuddered, kicking out vigorously with his right leg, and staggered to his feet. "Scully's my name, sir," he told Davies. "Signalman."

"At one time, we thought you'd had it," said Hewitt.

"So did I. Something coiled round my leg. I thought that the line had slipped and got tangled, so I dived under to free it. But it wasn't the line. That was still round my waist.

"I started to kick. I kicked until my trousers dropped off—and that got rid of whatever was pulling me down."

For a moment nobody spoke, but the castaways' thoughts turned to octopuses.

"It could have been an octopus, I suppose," said Davies. "They say this coast is alive with them."

"Big ones, too," added Jones, his arms describing a circle of enormous diameter.

By pulling on the line which Scully had brought them, the castaways hauled ashore a heavier rope, strung with lifebuoys to keep it afloat. The castaways fastened the end of this rope to oars and tent poles embedded in the sand.

After a talk with Dr. Wood, Hewitt, Naude and Johnston, the Chief Officer beckoned the rest of the men around him.

"How many of you," he asked, "think you can get out to the lifeboat by hauling yourselves along the cable?"

"I wouldn't mind trying," interrupted a voice. It was Mrs. Whitworth.

"I don't believe you would," said Davies with a smile, "But I hope there'll be an easier way for the women."

A deckhand made his way from the

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rear of the crowd and offered himself as a volunteer.

When Davies agreed to his going, he pulled off his shirt, took a firm hold on the rope and walked out into the surf.

The others watched anxiously when a towering breaker engulfed him and tore one of his arms away from the rope. For an instant he seemed poised between sky and water. But he managed to hang on while the breaker swept by.

The deckhand was seen to grip the rope again with both hands and brace himself for the next onslaught. Sight of him was lost several times, yet his head always bobbed up again alongside the rope and it was clear that he had gained a few more feet in his desperate bid for safety.

How much battering could he take and still hang on?

A spontaneous cheer arose from the beach when the men in the lifeboat hauled the nearly-spent man aboard.

Everyone on the beach agreed it was a good omen that, after nearly two weeks of thirst and privation on Skeleton Coast at last one of their party had been rescued. . . .

The deckhand's success started a rush to follow his example, though the officers insisted on staying ashore until everyone else had been saved.

By mid-afternoon three seamen, five oilers, two gunners and four deckhands—fourteen in all—had followed safely along the rope out to the lifeboat.

Next, in order to pick up the women and children, one of the lifeboat's crew jumped into the surfboat and, holding on to the rope, pulled himself to the shore.

"How many can you take?" shouted Davies.

"Not more than eight, sir. Those are my orders."

The eight who put on the yellow lifejackets which were in the surfboat included the Taylors, Mrs. Whitworth, Mrs. Saad-Moussa and Mrs. El-Saifi, the English wife of a Cairo business man, who held her two-year-old daughter Nadya. Mrs. Blanche Palmer sat on the bottom of the boat, Sidney on her lap. The baby was so completely covered by his lifejacket that all that could be seen of him was a pair of dark eyes.

With the eight women and the babies, plus the man in the bow to haul the boat along the rope, the little craft looked crowded to capacity.

The perilous trip began.

The surfboat made surprisingly good progress, the spray flung high as her bow met each breaker, but when she reached the larger craft a line of surf higher than all the others swept down on both boats. The big lifeboat was lifted, pitched and reeled dizzily, yet rode the wave successfully.

All that could be seen of the surfboat and her passengers was a chaos of water and spray. The surfboat was hurled into the air and fell bottom-up.

Followed by Chapman and half a dozen others, Naude dashed into the water fully clothed and pulled himself along the rope. Dr. Wood set off back to the camp to fetch restoratives for any survivors. He was so weak that the walk through the sand took him ten minutes or more, and by the time he got back to the shore a breaker had taken the surfboat far up on the beach, a mass of splintered wood.

Naude and Chapman fought their way back to the beach with two exhausted women—Mrs. Whitworth and Mrs. Saad-Moussa. Among the others who reached the shore were Mrs. Taylor and Annabel. When they were sprawled on the sand, the centre of everyone's concern, the assistant purser, Ernest Johnston, demanded anxiously: "Where are the two with babies?"

Mrs. Whitworth, Annabel Taylor and Chapman were able to confirm the good news that these two mothers and their children had been hauled aboard the lifeboat.

In the fading daylight, the lifeboat crew secured their end of the rope by attaching it to an anchor and buoy, which they threw overboard, ready to be picked up for further rescue attempts the next day. Then, watched by the castaways, they set off back to the Nerine with those they had rescued.

That night, Mrs. Whitworth was awakened by screams. Groping in the dark, Dr. Wood located the source of them. It was Signalman Scully, who kept calling and shaking his right leg even after he had woken out of the nightmare of an octopus attacking him.

At 3 p.m. the next day, when the surf was at its quietest, the lifeboat headed towards the beach and picked up the floating end of the rope.

One after another, eleven men, including Scully and the seaman who had got back to land after his surfboat capsized, made the hazardous trip and were pulled into the lifeboat seemingly no worse for their struggle.

Davies was beginning to wonder if some of the women shouldn't try the cable after all when the surf began to rise. The twelfth and thirteenth men to attempt the trip had gone only part of the way when a particularly vicious wave tore them off the rope.

Two oilers, who had stripped to their shorts and were standing in the shallows ready to take their turn, flung themselves to the rescue of their comrades and started swimming out along the rope. Davies, Hewitt and other men followed them.

Rescuers and rescued, coughing and choking, crawled ashore a hundred yards north of where they had entered the water.

The anchored lifeboat was having a bad time too, the Benguella Current continually swinging her broadside to the waves, and the castaways were not surprised to see the crew abandon such

IN JOHN BULL

So you want to be a beauty queen?

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Lords and ladies for life—the new peers hold a key to the future of the Upper House

Will this new blood save the Lords?

by LORD KINROSS

NEXT WEEK

a dangerous mooring and row out to the Nerine with the afternoon's "catch" of rescued men.

But while the rest of the castaways and four airmen left on the beach were resting and drying out, wondering how many more could be taken off tomorrow in the same way, the minesweeper suddenly weighed anchor, blew a long farewell blast and steamed off to the south.

Everyone was stunned.

As Davies, weak from the rescue in which he had taken part, stumbled back to camp, he started to excuse the Nerine's action.

"I expect that if I commanded the Nerine and had a crowd of men, women and babies dumped on me with no place to stow them and fuel was running low, and seas were getting higher, I would head for home, too."

But Davies, like the others, couldn't help wondering what would happen if a long stretch of stormy weather blew up, making it impossible to use the rope again. Supposing the weather grounded the supply planes which were dropping them food? What would happen when the castaways' present small hoard had gone?

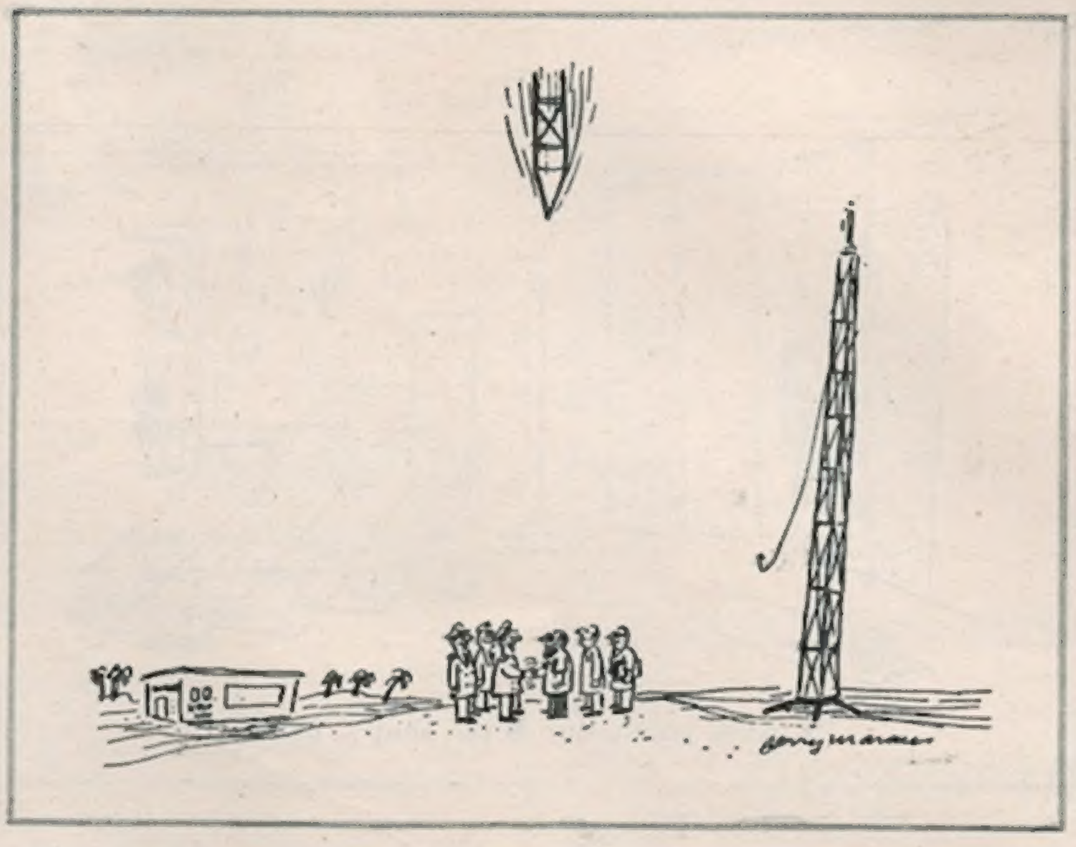
It was young Thompson who thought of a plan to solve this problem. The next morning, with Davies's approval, he set to work.

The idea was simple. It was to inflate the airmen's rubber dinghy, row out to the wreck of the Dunedin Star, cut loose two big life rafts and tow them back loaded with all the food and water that could be salvaged.

Choosing Nicolay for his swimming ability, the cook for his knowledge of the wreck's larder layout and, for sheer strength, a passenger named James Leitch, Thompson assembled his helpers.

It took them an hour to paddle the dinghy out to the wreck, where they took the opportunity of lighting a fire on the well-deck and cooking themselves a meal.

Afterwards, they cut loose both of the life rafts that were on the foremast shrouds and floated them round to the stern of the Dunedin Star, on the leeward side. Next, they piled supplies into one of the wreck's lifeboats that still hung in its davits, and launched it. When the rafts had been secured to its stern and stacked with more food and water, the men set out for the beach.



Then came a crisis.

Instead of obediently following the lifeboat the rafts, swept sideways by the Benguella Current, began to drift northwards, pulling the stern of the lifeboat after them. The men had reckoned on being able to tow the rafts; now the rafts were towing them.

The men rowed frantically, trying to prevent their heavily-laden craft from falling into the trough of the sea and capsizing. To make matters worse, one of the oars was lost.

The only thing to do was to cut the rafts loose. The cook crawled aft and slashed the towline with one of the lifeboat's axes.

At once, the rafts quickly drifted to the north where, it was hoped, they would eventually come ashore. Meanwhile, the men struggled to save themselves and the lifeboat.

Just as the lifeboat was about to run ashore, it swung round, heeled over towards the beach and shipped considerable water. The next breaker pounded it like a battering ram. In a matter of seconds it lay on the sand, its cargo of food and water about to spill overboard.

The crew had to scramble out and help the beach party to salvage it before it was swept away by the undertow.

An hour or so later, cans of water, potatoes, cabbages, tins of pork and beans, tinned butter and condensed milk—not to mention boxes of cigars, cartons of cigarettes and even some Spanish wine—lay safely in a heap at the camp.

That evening at dusk, the atmosphere in camp as the castaways ate supper was lighter and more cheerful than it had been for days. In twos and threes they huddled on the sand, exchanging small talk as they tasted food they had almost forgotten.

When Thompson and Nicolay suddenly heaped extra driftwood on to the fire and called for a sing-song, it needed little urging to start a medley of voices.

"Roll Out The Barrel" ended in a long discord, roars of laughter and Thompson's, "Once more, everybody!"

But the brief silence that followed was split by a fanatical scream.

"Stop, you fools! This is no time for laughter!"

It was Jones. His latest hallucination was that a big catastrophe was imminent.

Dr. Wood discovered with relief that some hyoscine and luminal still remained in his medicine chest. The other castaways tried to smile reassuringly as they overheard Jones's allusions to "rains of blood." But his continual references to "the awful disaster coming" had a sobering effect on them.

The afternoon of the next day was unbearably hot and sultry. A blanket of heat lay over the beach.

Wood and Davies were sitting beside each other when a far-off shout made them leap to their feet. A series of cries followed, drawing nearer and nearer.

"Jones again," groaned Davies.

"I was hoping he'd sleep," said Wood. "We'd better go to him."

As the pair hurried through the sand, Jones redoubled his cries until they merged into one long scream of terror in which the word "cannibals" could be recognized.

Suddenly, the lad began waving his arms and pointing to the south. Davies looked and stopped. Wood stopped too.

Davies said: "Doctor, do *you* see what *I* see?"

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NEXT WEEK: On the move at last—across the desert

Battle of the High Street

Continued from page 11

per cent discount. This buying in bulk gives the chain store a flying start with its price cuts.

Leonard Melling, a grocer of Bath, Somerset, recently declared: "Only amateurs in the trade resort to price-cutting tactics." Many small grocers comfort themselves with this idea, but they are whistling in the dark.

It is true that for years small men have bustled into the grocery trade, gained customers by cutting prices, over-reached themselves and gone bankrupt. Until two years ago it was easy enough for small grocers to control the price-cutter. They had only to agree to boycott manufacturers who supplied the price-cutters, and the cutter often found himself on a black list with little on his shelves to sell.

A Greenwich grocer, Alfred Bass, cut his prices in 1955. Manufacturers threatened to stop his supplies unless he conformed to a "fair trade price." He was still able to get supplies from a wholesaler who delivered in a plain van.

To put pressure on the wholesaler, too, the Proprietary Articles Trade Association, which was formed to protect goods usually sold in chemists' shops but also carried by many grocers, turned detective. Its agents traced the wholesaler through the van's registration number.

All this is now illegal. The Restrictive Trades Practices Act of 1956 prevents collective action aimed at fixing or enforcing retail prices.

The Act does allow, however, for collective agreements to be submitted for registration, after which the Restrictive Trades Practices Court may decide whether these agreements are against the public interest.

Recently the Northern Council of Grocers' Associations, representing 10,000 small grocers, sent a letter to six manufacturers.

The letter stated that most small men were able to buy the products of these manufacturers in the chain stores, retail, cheaper than they could direct from the manufacturer or wholesaler. It went on to say that if the manufacturers did not stop giving large discounts to bulk buyers the Council would urge its members to discriminate against their products; furthermore they would register this recommendation with the Registrar of Restrictive Trading Agreements.

Some manufacturers already make use of a clause in the Act which allows them to obtain, individually, injunctions against shopkeepers who sell below a fixed retail price. These manufacturers believe that, in the long run, price maintenance benefits the housewife.

THEY say: "A manufacturer's fixed retail price, widely advertised, means that wherever she shops the housewife knows exactly how much she will have to pay. There is no guarantee, if these prices are left to the individual grocer, that he will cut them. There are some grocers who would increase prices.

"All competition can disappear if the price-cutter puts his rivals out of business and is left with a monopoly in his district. Housewives might find themselves with no choice of shops; just one large shop which no longer felt it necessary to cut prices.

"Price maintenance on branded products is a guarantee of quality, stable prices and a wide choice of shops for the housewife."

Most independent grocers agree with this view. They are more immediately concerned, however, with their present-day troubles.

Douglas Griffin, past president of the London District Council of Grocers' Associations, says: "If it is fair for the manufacturers' workers to have fixed wages, then it is fair for his distributors—and that's what we are—to have fixed wages in the form of profit margins.

"Price cutting is equivalent to a man going to an employer and saying: 'Sack one of your men and I'll do his work for £1 a week less.'

"I believe in aggressive competition in the price of basic foods: butter, sugar, bacon, fats, cheese and cooked meats. These are open market goods which depend on our skill in bidding and choosing the best quality. But you can't bid for manufactured goods. The price is fixed right up to the retailer's counter.

"Cut-prices on branded goods are call birds, to decoy the housewife into the shop. In the end you will have supermarkets selling gramophone records, expendable hardware, toilet goods, cosmetics—all high margin stuff, sometimes as high as fifty per cent—on which people are not cost-of-living conscious. The cutters will then say: 'Food is the biggest draw; let's give it away at cost to get the people in.'"

Griffin's prophecy is already half-fulfilled by Premier Supermarkets, a cut-price chain run by a smart, silver-haired young man named Patrick Galvani. Galvani began in B.B.C. sound effects and went on to work as a film producer. He has carried his knowledge of showmanship into the grocery business, and he has patterns laid on the floors of his shops which lead the housewife on an unconscious walk towards goods which pay a high profit.

Galvani, who prefers the euphemism "setting our own retail prices" to the harsher "cut prices," recently opened a shop in Crawley New Town. There he sells records, books, nylons and stationery, and he has installed a coffee bar. Anthony Jackson Food Fare intend adding pre-packed wet fish and hardware in supermarkets which they are now building at Chatham and Bexleyheath. It is unlikely that the smallest grocers can survive. Even if the stronger independent grocers achieve some measure of price maintenance they will have to compete on prices if they are to hold their share of customers.

An independent commission, with Hugh Gaitskell as chairman, recently reported on production and marketing in the Co-operative Movement, which owns nearly 13,000 grocery shops. In Co-ops, the report recommended, "the prices charged must be competitive with those of the most dangerous rivals in each field."

As Garfield Weston's six grocer guests left for Canada, Sainsbury's, the 250-branch multiple which had remained aloof from the struggle, announced cuts in twenty items, including instant coffee. The firm's chairman said: "Price maintenance seems to be on the way out."

Hundreds of small grocers, without waiting for Garfield Weston, have already banded themselves into buying groups which enable them to modernize their shops and compete by making "special offers" of one or two cut-price lines.

Other small grocers are taking advantage of low prices offered by "cash and carry" warehouses. One is the Angel Warehouse Company, run by Sydney Ingram. "The grocer must pay cash and carry the goods away himself," Ingram says. "We assure them that they can buy goods here at the same price as that paid by Anthony Jackson shops." A similar warehouse operates in the north-east of England.

The fight for the housewife's custom goes on. Provided she awakes from the supermarket trance and shops as skilfully as the modern grocer sells, the housewife could turn out to be the true winner in the battle of the High Street.

THE END

How we made our toytown railway pay

Continued from page 15

Talyllyn Railway for the summer season, and to maintain a five days a week service. This was necessary if we were going to increase our funds. But first we had to put the permanent way in working order.

Our first working party was held during Easter weekend of 1951. About thirty members turned up, among them an engineer, an architect, a policeman, a printer, a timber merchant, an optician and an ex-Indian civil servant.

Hugh Jones and his son, Dai, both of whom had worked on the railway for many years, had agreed to remain on as permanent staff. Under their direction, our members did the labouring, clearing the track of growth, replacing old sleepers, and painting coaches and station buildings.

By taking old rails from a part of the line that we had decided to abandon, we managed to repair many of the defects in the track. While my wife helped by cleaning windows and doing other light work, I joined several members in collecting these rails. Each section of rail was twenty-one feet long and weighed two hundred and eighty pounds. It took three men to lift one.

On Whit Monday, 1951, the line was partially re-opened to traffic, and in June we began to operate our five days a week passenger service. Tom Rolt took on the job of general manager, Dai Jones drove the engine, and members spent their summer holidays working in the booking office, in the refreshment room, and on the track. We had to keep patching up the track at every available moment.

Our biggest piece of luck came when we needed it most. We wanted to rest our only serviceable locomotive, but this would have meant using one of the two engines we had bought from the Corris railway, and both were in poor condition. One of them needed a new boiler.

Then the managing director of the Hunslet Engineering Company in Leeds joined the society as a life member. He offered to carry out the repairs at no cost to the railway. This work would have cost us £600.

In those first few seasons our faith in the railway was amply justified. From 15,000 in the first season, our passenger figures rose to 22,000 in 1952.

The addition of a number of British Railways employees to our membership was also encouraging, though their methods of running a standard locomotive did not always work on our smaller stock.

In the winter of 1952-53 we began a serious re-laying programme. Sleepers were bought from British Railways, and with a gauge of only two feet three inches we were able to make two sleepers from one.

Using a cross-cut saw, it took us an hour to cut eight sleepers. One afternoon a local farmer who had been watching us walked back to his farm and returned with a petrol-driven chain saw. With this he began to cut the sleepers as fast as we could bring them to him, and in an hour he had cut fifty.

Many defects in the line were discovered by accident. On one occasion a working party was returning to Towyn with nine wagons full of sleepers when there was a sudden jolt, and three wagons came off the track, spilling a pile of sleepers on the ground. On examination it was found that the gauge at this point was two feet five inches instead of two feet three inches. Some of the sleepers had rotted away, causing the rails to slip to one side.

It was ten o'clock that night before the wagons were replaced on the track. While the repair gang worked by the light of lamps collected from a nearby station, one member gave added light where needed with a blazing piece of paraffin-soaked waste on a shovel.

In 1953 one of our members suggested asking the army to help us. Lord Northesk, our president, wrote to the War Office suggesting that our railway would provide an exercise in track laying, and in June more than seven hundred soldiers from the 127 Construction Regiment, R.E. (T.A.), set up camp next to our line. We provided the materials, and within a fortnight they had relaid a mile of track and repaired a sixty-foot viaduct which was bulging ominously.

Meanwhile our volunteer working parties and permanent staff had been busy. Two new bogie coaches and a number of wagons were rebuilt in our own workshops—now re-equipped with up-to-date milling machines, lathes and power drills paid for by members.

The success of our society had been watched with interest, both in this country and abroad. Following our example, the 123-year-old Festiniog Railway in North Wales was re-opened for the first time since 1939. Amateur railway enthusiasts in Australia, reading of our venture, revived a narrow-gauge railway in Victoria. A script-writer who visited our railway found material for a film in it, and Ealing Studios' *The Titfield Thunderbolt* was the result.

Looking back, I can see that many of our early mishaps were more amusing than serious. On a journey from Abergynolwyn to Towyn one day in July, 1952, I was acting as fireman. The route was all downhill, and as we reached a particularly steep part of the track, I looked back. The three coaches were about a hundred yards behind us, and travelling on their own. The coupling pin had slipped out.

Giving three sharp blasts on the whistle — a signal which we had arranged in case of emergencies — I waited anxiously for the guard to look out. Finally he did, and quickly applied his brakes. The engine driver put the engine into reverse, and we had coupled up again and moved off before any of the passengers could realize what had happened.

On one occasion a passenger, missing the evening train back to Towyn, used a workman's trolley for the return journey. Propelling the trolley like a scooter, he arrived in the station only five minutes after the train.

When one of the Corris engines, which had very narrow wheel treads, slipped between the rails one day in 1953, passengers were told that it would take several hours to put it back on the tracks. No other transport was available and they had to walk the four and a half miles back to Towyn.

On their arrival the general manager offered to refund their money. Instead of accepting it, twenty of them offered to join the society and, after a quick whip-round, gave £8 for track repairs.

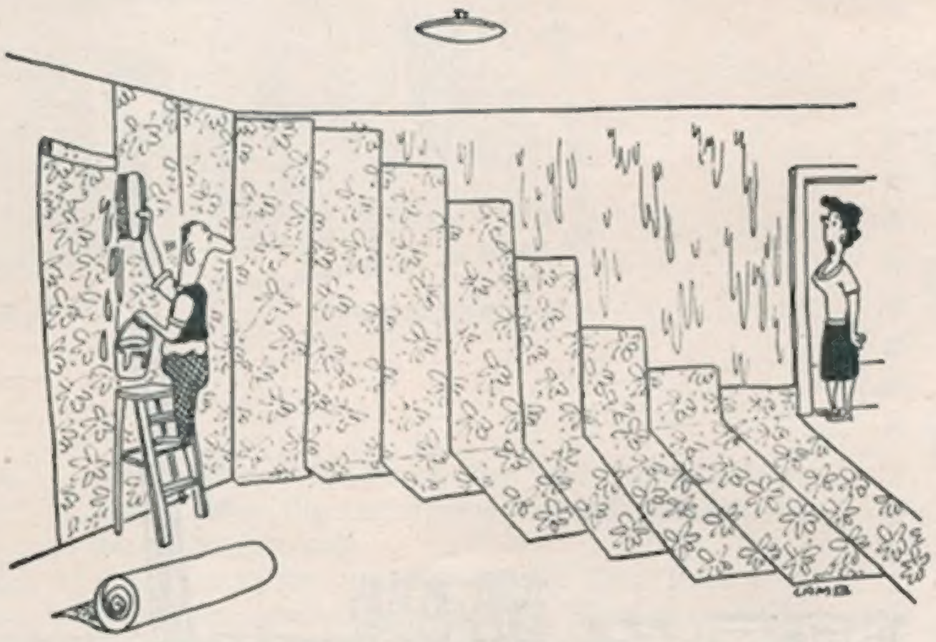
Today we have a general manager, an assistant manager, a permanent-way foreman and two engine drivers on our permanent staff. Our membership has risen to two thousand and last year the railway carried a record number of 56,000 passengers.

Although we feel that we have largely achieved our object in preserving the Talyllyn Railway as a working example of a narrow-gauge line, our work is not yet over. Two of our engines will have to be overhauled soon at a cost of £2,500; £1,500 worth of rolling stock will have to be acquired; and another £3,500 will have to be spent to put the track in proper order.

Part of the attraction of running this railway, however, lies in the unusual problems that have to be solved.

When Lord Northesk was firing on one of the engines at our annual meeting in 1956, a soft, dewy mist had settled on the rails, making the ascent of some of the steeper gradients a tricky task. As we got into the hills, the train began to slip violently. Finally Lord Northesk had to sit on the front buffer beam of his engine with a sack of sand in his hand, sanding the rail ahead so that the wheels could get a grip.

In his speech at the end of the meeting he told members that he felt very like the chairman of British Railways. "But if anyone has a photo of Sir Brian Robertson sitting on the buffer beam of one of his Britannias with a sack of sand in his hand, I would like to see it." THE END



"I think your paste is too soupy, dear"

VOICES—4

Where's the voice, however soft,
One would hear so very oft?

John Keats

Winners from the bargain basement

Continued from page 22

for £25. Clatford, a horse owned by a Hereford farmer, was sold for £125 and then won a dozen races.

Pringle coaxes cheap horses into racing form in many ways. "If it were likely to help," he says, "I'd read them bedtime stories."

Giles Farnaby, a horse owned by a Norwich farmer, was thrown out of a larger stable as a four-year-old for £50. "It had the makings of a good runner," says Pringle, "but it had a sense of inferiority. It had been dominated by other horses and riders."

Pringle let his daughter, who was then thirteen, exercise Giles Farnaby. At first the horse was docile, but after a while the girl told her father she could no longer manage the animal. Says Pringle: "I knew the horse was ready for racing. Finding someone it could boss had given it confidence."

A few weeks later Giles Farnaby, an outsider, won from Kipling Walk, a two-to-one-on favourite which had been sold for £750 by the same stable that sold Farnaby for £50.

Winners have even been given away. Last year one owner gave instructions that a horse sired by My Babu, the Derby winner, should be destroyed. The animal, a big six-year-old bay called My Foot, had been unplaced only three times in more than twenty races, but in the stables it was a potential killer. It attacked everyone who entered its box.

Pringle asked if he could take the horse rather than that it should be killed. "It's yours," said the owner. "And so is the responsibility."

For four months Pringle could not touch the animal. "It roared like a lion and kicked like lightning." To clean out the stable he had to let the horse into a paddock. Afterwards he lured it back with food. He discovered that it was more than usually fond of carrots.

Each day Pringle grated them into the animal's oats. Always he carried a carrot in his pocket. When he had established enough of a friendship to be able to handle the horse a little, he discovered its trouble. It had an abnormally sensitive skin and was terrified of being groomed.

Though My Foot still requires treating with caution, it now submits to a normal stable routine. "It will be racing again soon," says Pringle.

At Epsom, a consistently successful buyer and trainer of bargain price bloodstock is Peter Thrale. Bitter Sweet, a horse he once bought for £400, won the Brown Jack Stakes three years in succession.

The Cesarewich winner Three Cheers cost Thrale £500. And a horse called Hills of Devon, which he bought for £400, eventually won more than a hundred times its price.

Thrale's wife has been equally lucky. A few years ago she paid £50 at a sale for a horse called Alwen Court. The animal won two races and was sold for £1,000.

RACING history records many bargain horses. In 1851 the Derby was won by Teddington, a horse born in a barn at Great Stukely. Its dam, Miss Twickenham, had been given away to the local blacksmith, Jack Tomlinson.

One of the luckiest owners was the late Tom Walls, the actor, who also trained racehorses. Walls once accepted a half-share in a horse called April the Fifth in lieu of its training expenses. In 1931 April the Fifth won the Derby for Walls and his co-owner.

Favourites fail more often than they win. Many factors conspire to give the small owner's outsider a sporting chance, among them the frequency with which expert horsemen are wrong about horses.

At Newmarket in October, 1954, two colts reared by the same breeder in Ireland came up for sale together. The first, Arcandy, was bought for nine hundred guineas and became a champion sprinter. Two minutes after the first horse was sold, Sir Gordon Richards paid nine thousand guineas for the second one, Ungava, which proved a disappointment.

Bill Fisher, a shopkeeper who lives at Newbury, Berks, has a third share in a racehorse named Seminole, and reckons that it costs £1,000 a year to keep and race the horse.

It is estimated that less than half-a-dozen owners in this country make their racing pay. Among them is the Queen. She won £62,211 in stake money last year, and has gained more than £120,000 since she started racing in 1953.

Big owners depend on "classic" winners, which become valuable stud properties, to help balance their budgets. Even the stud business is a gamble. A week after Campanelle, the "barren" mare which Radclyffe bought for £75, won at Newmarket, it split a pastern and was ruined for racing. The horse was given to a farmer at King's Lynn who promised that it would have a good home.

As a long shot, the farmer had the mare mated to a racing stallion. This year, at the age of sixteen, Campanelle produced a foal. THE END

WOMEN OF FEW WORDS!

DO women use too many words? Mrs. G. M. Egerton (Newark) can express her thoughts in *four*! In a magazine she noticed pictures of feminine "do-it-yourself" fans. They gave her an idea. She condensed her thoughts thus: **Modern Girl—Painting Face, Town—*Home*!** Those few words won £500 in Bullets!

£ s. d.

ANOTHER woman who doesn't waste words is Mrs. E. Sharpe (Ealing). While relaxing after lunch one Sunday, she chose a few words which expressed just what was in her mind: **What Everyone Wants—The "Pick"—But *Shovel*—?** That crisp thought gained her £500—this woman's *second* First in Bullets!

£ s. d.

"I COULD make a Bullet!" declared young Mrs. J. B. Buckland (Preston). She thought £500 would help to buy the little business she wanted. Famous stars' names were the "words" she used, this way: **On The 1957 Screen—"More" "Wisdom," "Hope," "Justice"?** Mrs. B. won £500 with her *first* Bullet!

£ s. d.

"I'M completely fascinated and spellbound by Bullets!" Mrs. M. Weatherhead (Luton) said that after discovering *John Bull*. Fun With Words brought her £300 for this Bullet: **In The City Jungle—Hooting, Screeching, Screaming—*Solitude*!** Commented the winner, "I couldn't have been happier had it been £75,000!"

£ s. d.

"I GET lots of entertainment from Bullets," said Mrs. J. S. Carder, of tiny Brora, in the north of Scotland. "I just study the Examples and think them out." One effort she thought out recently was: **Summit Of Success—Security, Serenity And—Seventy!** It won her £600 plus £200 worth of luxuries.

£ s. d.

"I'LL never laugh at you and your Bullets again!" Comment from a mere *man* . . . husband of Mrs. G. J. Elborn (Edinburgh) who won £1,000 for her few words: **Way To Run Britain—Like Ruhr—Not "Ruritania"!** *Meet on next week's* £1,500 *Bullets page another "woman of few words" who has just won* £1,000!

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£450 plus £150 Home Movie Award: A. T. Grady, 72 Drury Road, Harrow:

A Sinister Traveller—
Fly—"Bath," "Banbury," "Chelsea"—

£25 V. Rose, 14 Kelvin Court, Woodlands Grove, Isleworth: **The Restless Ocean—"Sandbags" *Won't* Contain—Nationalism.**

£10 H. R. Nicholas, 40 Fairholme Estate, Bedfont, Feltham: **When Nobody's Jobless—Homeless, Hopeless—Communism Helpless.**

£9 Miss M. Brittain, Five Ways, Hatton, Warwick: **Old Faithful—Hubby—Life's Been "Hayride"!**

£8 Mrs. E. Hobson, Keyingham Grange Cottages, Burstwick, Hull: **Speeches, Speeches, Speeches—But A *World* "Undelivered"!**

£7 J. W. Kitt, 55 Ford Hill, Stoke, Plymouth: **On Sunday—"Unwind"—On Monday, *Spring*!**

£6 P. Gee, "Kenmore," Ladythorn Road, Bramhall, Cheshire: **In Honeysuckle Cottage—Those Vandals—Installing *Drains*!**

£5 Mrs. E. N. Levesly, 54 Lydgate Lane, Sheffield: **To Stop The Bloodshed—*Sever* Roadhog From Licence!**

£5 Mrs. L. Walton, The Cottage, Steel Heath, Whitchurch, Salop: **With All Her Curlers—Bristling—"You Haven't *Shaved*!"**

£5 J. Ward, 15 Skelton Street, Bryn, Wigan: **Weakening—West's Foothold, Nasser's "Slime."**

For ten winners of £2 10s. see *Bullets Bulletin*. 100 "Double Six" Prizes and 1,500 "Good Shot" Awards have also been posted.

RULES 1. First Prize for best Bullet received; others in order of merit. The test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.

2. Editor undertakes that all Bullets received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover Bullets in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries 6d. per Bullet. Make P.O. payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that result of this Contest (in JOHN BULL dated September 20), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, September 6, for early news of Bullets No. 2,155 First Prize Award.)

ADDRESS ENTRY: Bullets No. 2,155, "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.99

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Name.....

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Follow Her to 30 Prizes!

MRS. G. M. TRUSCOTT (Liskeard) won £300 plus thrilling "Month of Surprises" for a Bullet. Every day for 30 days she received an exciting new gift. This week, *you* can win a much bigger cheque *and* 30 daily surprises value £125!

Here's how to shape a Bullet. First, grasp the broad idea by enjoying the latest winners on left. Then choose as your starting-point any Example from list below. To it, add TWO, THREE or FOUR words to make the whole into a bright Bullet for your coupon waiting below.

ADD 2, 3 or 4 WORDS to any EXAMPLE

Stronger Nation	A Poor Lot
Oasis Of Peace	Magnified
Remember, Nasser	In The Frozen North
In Industry's Train	Bunkum
The Health Service	At Saturation Point
A Laugh's A Tonic, So	Not Taken In
For The Cypriots	Paying More
Killed On The Road	With A Snooty Air
Another Star	Nattering Away
Spoilt The Picture	Had Her Work Cut Out

Last six Examples are incomplete: if you wish to use one, first complete it with a word of your choice—then make your Bullet as above.

The ..... Before Us	If You're Not.....
Those Russian.....	Knee-deep In .....
Converted The	The.....Closed Down And

EXAMPLE .....

BULLET

EX. .....

B.

EX. .....

B.

EX. .....

B.

EX. .....

B.

£2 SEASONS A £2 Bullets Season Ticket accompanies each of the 20 chief prizes won with Bullet which was one of five or more on single coupon or plain-paper entry sheet.

2,155 Post not later than last collection on **MONDAY, AUG. 25**

I agree to rules and enclose P.O. entry-fee at the rate of 6d. per Bullet.

P.O. Value.....

No.....

Signed.....

Address.....

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STICK 3d. STAMP HERE

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